kiniro 1 mosaic
Yui Hara

kiniro mosaic 1

Yui Hara

characters

ALICE CARTELET
(bright)

SHINOBU OOMIYA
(graceful)

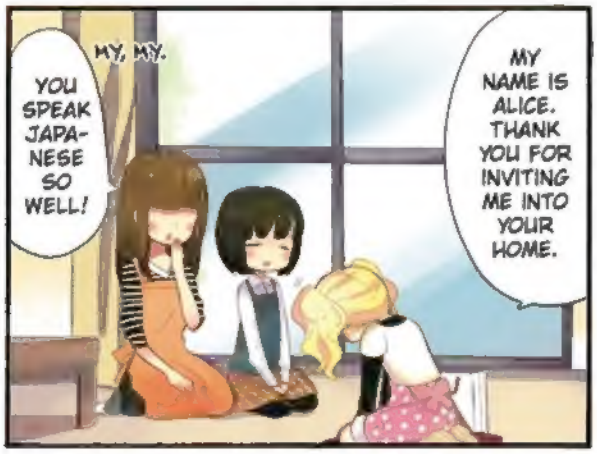
KAREN KUJOU
(free)

YOUKO INOKUMA
(lively)

AYA KOMICHI
(delicate)

AS THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS BLOOMED ...

...AN ENGLISH GIRL CAME TO OUR HOUSE.



THAT HAIR AND THOSE EYES... SHE LOOKS LIKE A DOLL.
TALK ABOUT RARE!
WHO'DA THUNK WE'D MAKE A FRIEND FROM ABROAD, RIGHT AT THE START OF HIGH SCHOOL?

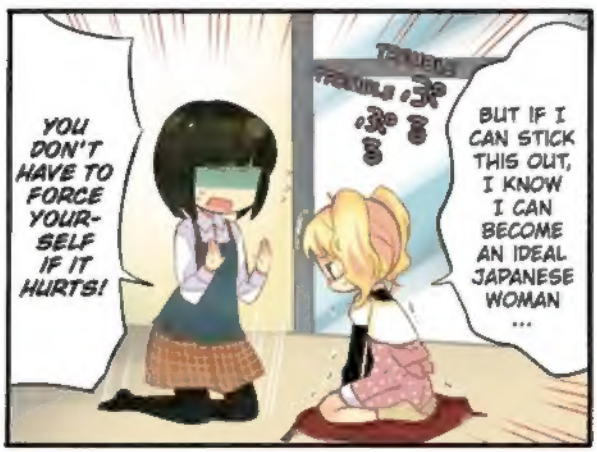
TINY 'N' QUIET.

IT MAKES YOU WANT TO PUT HER IN A DRESS, PLACE HER INSIDE A GLASS CASE, AND GAZE AT HER ALL DAY LONG.
...OR NOT!
I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN.

I WORE A KIMONO ONCE TOO.
YOU CAN RELAX!
OH, YOU'RE SO GOOD AT SITTING IN FORMAL JAPANESE STYLE.

THEY SAY THAT THE TWELVE LAYERS OF A FULL TRADI-TIONAL KIMONO WEIGH AS MUCH AS 22 POUNDS!
SITTING LIKE THIS HURTS, BUT THE KIMONO WAS HEAVY AND HOT TOO. IT WAS SO HARD.

I THOUGHT YOU WERE SERIOUS.
OH...
THIS IS WHERE YOU LAUGH!
I—
I WOULD NOT DO THAT!
IT WAS A JOKE! PLEASE LAUGH!!


YOU DON'T HAVE TO FORCE YOUR-SELF IF IT HURTS!
BUT IF I CAN STICK THIS OUT, I KNOW I CAN BECOME AN IDEAL JAPANESE WOMAN ...

YUP! WANNA KNOW THE KANJI CHAR-ACTERS FOR IT?
YOUKO, YOUR LAST NAME IS "INOKUMA" ?

ALICE, DO YOU KNOW HOW TO USE CHOP-STICKS?

MAKES ME SOUND KINDA TOUGH! COOL, AMIRITE?
IT'S WRITTEN AS "BOAR" PLUS "BEAR"!
どーん
BAM

さっ ZIP
さっ ZIP
さっ ZIP

↑ GREEN PEAS

UH...?

AYA? IF YOU PUT YOUR MIDDLE FINGER MORE LIKE THIS, IT SHOULD BE EASIER TO HOLD.

I BROKE HER JAPA-NESE !!
N-NO EAT ME... I NOT TASTE GOOD...

TH-THANK YOU...
さっ ZIP
さっ ZIP
SHE'S BETTER AT IT THAN ME...

Y-YEAH.
PERFECT PEOPLE DON'T EXIST.
EVERY-ONE MAKES MIS-TAKES.

AH!
FLAP FLAP FLAP
OH NO!

THEY SURE ARE.
DOJIKKO ARE SO CUTE, RIGHT!?

NO BIGGIE! IN JAPAN, WE CALL THAT BEING A DOJIKKO: A CLUMSY CUTEY!
I'M SOR-RYYY...

AAAH!
MY NOTE-BOOK!!
SOAKED!
SO...I ACCIDENTALLY DROPPED YOUR NOTEBOOK IN A BUCKET A MINUTE AGO...

DOJI...?
YEAH. IT'S CUTER TO BE JUST A LITTLE KLUTZY!

NICE TRY, CLUM-SY!!
BUT DOJIKKO ARE SO CUTE, RIGHT?

?
I AGREE.

BUT SINCE YOU CAME HERE TO SEE ME, IT'S AS THOUGH MY DREAM ALREADY CAME TRUE!

I'D LIKE TO GO BACK TO ENGLAND WHEN I'M OLDER.

READ THE MOOD!
GIVEN THAT DIRECTION,
NO, IT'S PROBABLY LANDING IN TOKYO.

DO YOU THINK THAT AIRPLANE IS BOUND FOR ENGLAND?

TIME TO GET UP, SHINOBU! YOU DON'T WANT TO BE LATE!
OKAAAY!
LOOK, I HAVE THE AIRMAIL YOU SENT ME!
VIA AIR MAIL
IT WAS ALL SO SUDDEN THAT IT NEARLY KNOCKED MY SOCKS OFF!
WHAT A SURPRISE!
ACTUALLY, MY MOM KEPT YOUR VISIT A SECRET FROM ME.
THIS LETTER IS WHERE IT ALL STARTED, HMM?
UH-HUH!

AWW, SO MANY MEMO-RIES.
RIP
RIP
I'M LEAVING NOW!
OH!
AIRMAIL!
IT'S FOR ME...
YAY!
...FROM ALICE! I THOUGHT SO!
BLANK
IT'S ALL IN ENGLISH...
SHINOBU!? WHAT ABOUT SCHOOL!?

ALICE WAS THE DAUGHTER OF THAT FAMILY.
OH, SHE'S FROM ENG-LAND?
THAT'S COOL.
IN MIDDLE SCHOOL, I WENT OVERSEAS AND DID A HOMESTAY.

YOU'RE LATE, SHINO!
GOOD MORNING, AYA-CHAN! YOUKO-CHAN!
THERE SHE IS.

I CAN'T READ THE LETTER. I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT I WAS GOING TO DO!
JUST A BIT...
HUH?
AYA-CHAN, CAN YOU READ ENGLISH!?

SHINO, YOU HAVE A FRIEND OVER-SEAS?
WHOA! IS THAT AIRMAIL?
I'M SORRY!
I LOST TRACK OF TIME READING THIS LETTER ...

WOW!
INCRED-IBLE! YOU CAN REALLY READ ENGLISH!
MAY-BE...
ERR...
I THINK IT SAYS, UH... SHE'S C... COMING TO JAPAN.

ALICE? THE ALICE!?
NO WAY!
YES!
I DO! HER NAME IS ALICE.

SHUT UP, YOU-KO !!
SH—
DON'T LET SHINO DOWN NOW, AYA.
WHAT ELSE DOES IT SAY? DID SHE SAY WHEN?

SHINO, LET ME SEE THAT FOR A SECOND.
WHOAA... FROM WONDER-LAND...

SHINO-BU!?
PATTER
PATTER
のだ
I'M SORRY IT TOOK ME SO LONG TO CHANGE SHOES!

HEY, DON'T RUSH ME.
COME ON ALREADY!!
WE SHOULD ASK A TEACHER! THEY'D BE MORE RELIABLE THAN ME.
UMM, PARDON ME!

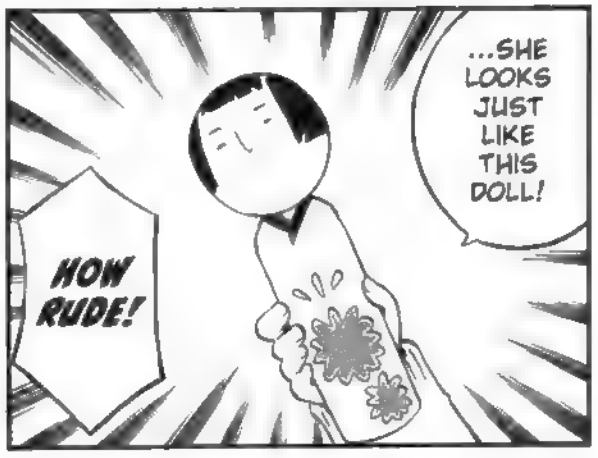
OH! ALICE!
SHINOBU! I MISSED YOUUU!!
YOU REALLY CAME TO JAPAN!!

WHOA!
BLOND HAIR ALERT !!
DO YOU HAPPEN TO KNOW A GIRL NAMED SHINOBU?

HEY, AYA. LOOK ...
OH, YOU NOTICED TOO?
IT'S SO NICE TO SEE YOU!
SHE HAS OUR UNIFORM. DO YOU THINK SHE'S...

I'M SORRY. I DON'T HAVE A PICTURE, BUT...
RUMMAGE
RUMMAGE
HUH!?
SHINO?

THAT IS REALLY IS
THE MORE I LOOK AT HER
NO, NOT THAT. LIKE, I CAN ONLY SEE SHINO AS A LIFE-SIZED KOKESHI DOLL NOW...


...SHE LOOKS JUST LIKE THIS DOLL!
HOW RUDE!

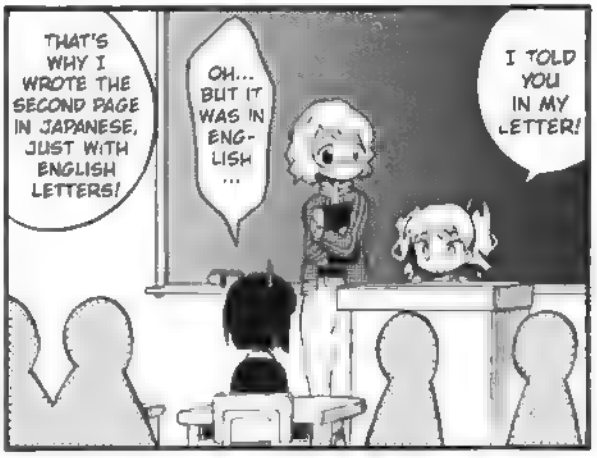
YOU CAN WRITE JAPANESE TOO?
I GUESS I SHOULD HAVE WRITTEN IT ALL IN JAPANESE CHARACTERS!
YEAH, BUT SUPER-SLOW.

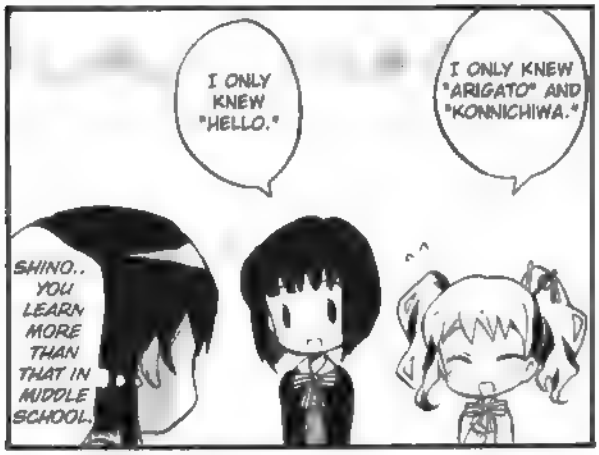
IT'S NICE TO MEET YOU ALL. MY NAME IS ALICE CARTELET.
I TRANSFERRED HERE FROM ENGLAND. I HOPE WE'LL BE FRIENDS.

ENGLISH ISN'T SHINO'S STRONG SUIT.
THAT'S AMAZING.
YOU MUST HAVE BEEN A LIFESAVER DURING HER HOME-STAY.
WOOOW...

YOU JUST REALIZED !!?
WHAA...!?

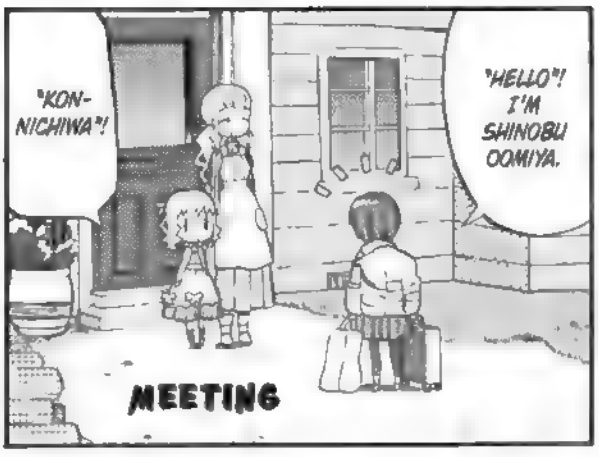
...I COULD BARELY SPEAK A WORD OF JAPANESE!
OH, BACK THEN...
REALLY !?


THAT'S WHY I WROTE THE SECOND PAGE IN JAPANESE, JUST WITH ENGLISH LETTERS!
OH... BUT IT WAS IN ENG-LISH ...
I TOLD YOU IN MY LETTER!


I ONLY KNEW "HELLO."
I ONLY KNEW "ARIGATO" AND "KONNICHIWA."
SHINO.. YOU LEARN MORE THAN THAT IN MIDDLE SCHOOL.

AYA!
WHAA...!?

DO YOU LIKE ENGLISH, SHINOBU?
HOORAY! FIRST PERIOD IS ENGLISH CLASS!


"KON-NICHIWA"!
"HELLO"! I'M SHINOBU OOMIYA.
MEETING

KARA-SUMA-SENSEI. OUR HOME-ROOM TEACHER.
IT'S KARASU-CHAN THAT SHINO LIKES.
WITH THE GLASS-ES?
"KA-RA-SU"?
YUP!

EVERYDAY INTERACTIONS
"HELLO"!
"ARIGA-TO"!

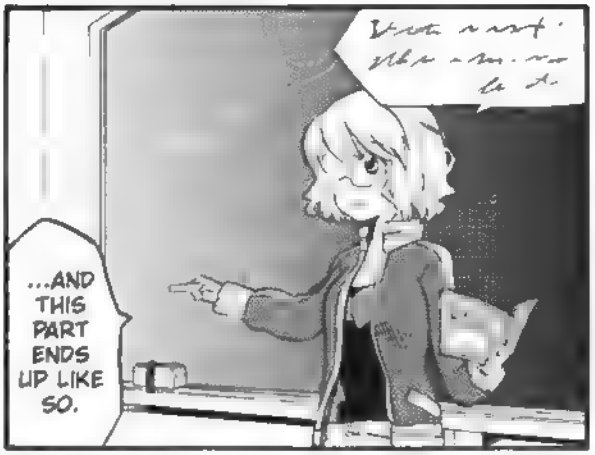
SHE SPEAKS ENGLISH SO SMOOTH-LY...
SHE'S KIND ...
SHE'S PRETTY ...
SHE'S MATURE ...
SHE WEARS A TRACK JACKET ..
FROM HER HIGH SCHOOL YEARS

SAYING GOOD-BYE
"KON-NICHIWA"!
"HELLO"! "HELLO"!
VROOM

INCLUD-ING THE TRACK JACKET?
I WANT TO BE JUST LIKE HER!
.....

I DON'T THINK SO!!
JUST LIKE THAT, WE WERE ABLE TO HAVE REAL CON-VERSATIONS.

YES, ALICE-SAN?
CLATTER
MA'AM!


...AND THIS PART ENDS UP LIKE SO.

"MISS KARASUMA! ACTUALLY, YOUR ENGLISH IS A TAD AWKWARD!"
CLAMOR
REAL ENGLISH!
WHOA.

HOW'S MY ENGLISH, ALICE-SAN?
I'M A BIT NERVOUS HAVING A NATIVE SPEAKER IN CLASS!

EVERYONE, ALICE IS VOLUN-TEERING TO READ FOR US.
EXCEL-LENT, ALICE-SAN!

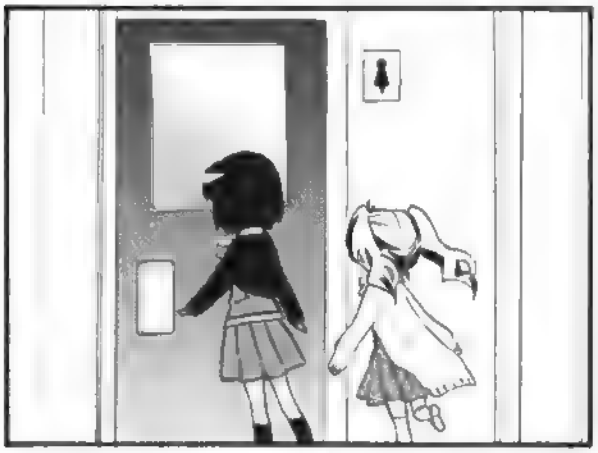
SENSEI! YOUR ENGLISH IS THE BEST IN JAPAN!!
WHY, THANK YOU!

HOW DID THIS HAPPEN?
FROM THE TOP OF PAGE FORTY, PLEASE.
WOW...

CLENCH!
A—
A RIVAL!

WE HAVE MATH NEXT!

SHINO. PENCIL CASE?
WE'RE GOIN' TO THE SCIENCE LAB.
SHINO! ALICE! MOVE YOUR BUTTS!
OOPS! I FORGOT IT!



THAT'S MY NICKNAME! ALL OF MY FRIENDS CALL ME THAT.
WHY DO THEY CALL YOU "SHINO"?
OOH! THERE'S SENSE!!

OH DEAR. LITTER!

SEN-SEI!
DART
THAT'S IT!
I'M GOING TO CALL SHINOBU "SHINO"!

LOOKS MORE LIKE A DUCK TO ME.
SHE'S FOLLOWING SHINO LIKE A LITTLE SISTER...

TOO CUTE ...
WARM FUZZIES
MY! YOU TWO ARE CLOSE!
WAIT, WHY ARE THEY REACTING LIKE THIS!?
BLUSH

WHERE ARE YOU STAYING?
MM-HM!
SO, DID YOU FLY TO JAPAN ALONE?

AH... ACTUALLY ...
HEY ALICE, THOSE HAIR STICKS SURE ARE CUTE.

ALICE !!
UMM... I'M DOING A HOMESTAY AT SHI-NO'S—

...SHINO GAVE THESE TO ME WHEN SHE CAME FOR HER HOMESTAY...
!

WITH NO-WHERE TO STAY...
YOU POOR THING ... ALL ALONE ...
HUH?
TEARY

YOU REALLY KEPT THEM ALL THIS TIME...
I DID GIVE YOU THOSE, DIDN'T I?

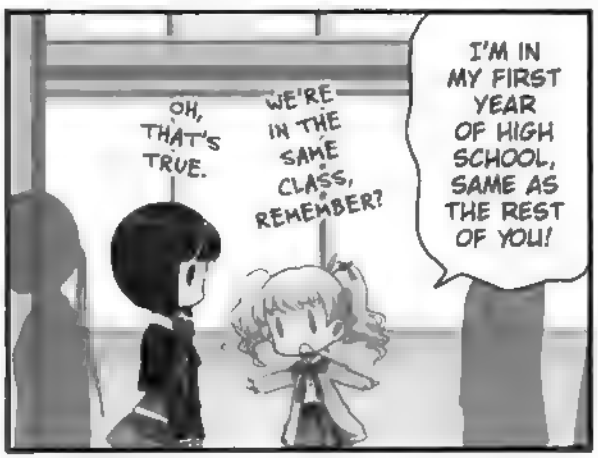
AH HA HA!
UM! THAT WAS THE PLAN!
WE MAY NOT HAVE MUCH, BUT!!
THERE'S ALWAYS ROOM FOR YOU IN MY HOME!
...
HUG

YOU'RE SCARY!
LIKE PEOPLE.
OH, BUT AT THE TIME, I THOUGHT THEY WERE FOR STABBING THINGS.
SHOCK
WHAT ARE YOU, A HITMAN !?

I'M FIVE-FOOT-ONE, MYSELF...
IT'S JUST THAT YOU'RE RATHER SHORT FOR A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT.

WHAA —?
HOW OLD ARE YOU TURNING THIS YEAR, ALICE?

I'M NOT THAT SHORT !!
THAT MAKES YOU... ABOUT A FOOT AND EIGHT INCHES?


OH, THAT'S TRUE.
WE'RE IN THE SAME CLASS, REMEMBER?
I'M IN MY FIRST YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL, SAME AS THE REST OF YOU!

IS YOUR CHEST SMALL 'COS YOU'RE SHORT?
WHAT'S THAT?
SO YOU'RE SELF-CONSCIOUS ABOUT YOUR HEIGHT?
NOD
コク…
YOU REALLY DON'T NEED TO WORRY ABOUT THAT.
SHE'S RIGHT.
OH, COME ON. HEIGHT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THAT.
I WOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT IT. YOU STILL HAVE TIME TO GROW.
HOW COME? SMALL THINGS ARE CUTE!
YA SEE?
WE'VE GOT A PERFECT EXAMPLE RIGHT HERE.
COULD I STILL GROW?
BUT...
...SINCE PRIMARY SCHOOL, I'VE ONLY GROWN ABOUT ONE INCH...
NICE WEATHER...
I'M KIDDING!
IT WAS JUST A JOKE!!
GRRRR
TELL ME IT'S NOT TRUE!!
T—
IT'S TOO LATE ...
AT THAT POINT ...

JUST MEMORIZE EVERYTHING I SAY, AND YOU'LL DO FINE ON THE MAKEUP TEST.
THERE'S STILL HOPE!
OBSERVING
YES, EBEN.

HEY, SHINO.
AYA-CHAN, WILL YOU HELP ME STUDY?
HOW'D YOU DO ON THAT TEST?

FOR THIS PART, X=5, RIGHT?
CALCU-LATE THIS FIRST.
YES, EBEN.
EBEN. EBEN.
YES, EBEN.
OH! I SOLVED IT, EBEN!

!!?
NOT SO SWELL...

ARGH!
I JUST COULDN'T GET THE WORD OUT, OKAY?
BLUSH
YOU DON'T HAVE TO RUB IT IN!

"NOT SO SWELL"?
IT'S A ZERO!
YOU CAN'T GET ANY WORSE THAN THIS.

I THOUGHT IT WAS GOING TO BE ON THE TEST...
DON'T MEMO-RIZE POINT-LESS STUFF!

THIS GRADE... I CAN'T EBEN...
IN SHOCK
EBEN?

※ THIS IS ALL LIES.

BOX: STRAWBERRY AU LAIT

BOOK: CLASSIC LIT

うーん
HOW DO THEY FEEL ABOUT ME ANYWAY?

I'M GLAD YOU SEEM TO HAVE ADJUSTED TO SCHOOL IN JAPAN.

ガラッ
RATTLE
I'M BACK...

AND YOU'VE MADE SO MANY FRIENDS!
FRIENDS!?

ALICE'S

HMM
...
YOU ARE...
...SOOO TINY.
HOW OLD ARE YOU?
IF YOU GET LONELY...
...I CAN BE YOUR MOTHER.

OH!
SHE'S BACK!

NO?
FROZEN
...

BUT I WANT YOU TO KNOW ...
GLOOM
...THAT YOU'RE A VERY DEAR FRIEND TO ME!

SHINO !!
WE COULD GO TO A PET SHOP AND...
WE WERE TALKING ABOUT STOPPING SOMEWHERE AFTER SCHOOL TODAY!

MORE DEAR THAN BUNNIES AND HAMSTERS !?
! YOU MEAN IT!?
?
OF COURSE!
YES!

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT ME!?
GIVE ME AN HONEST ANSWER!
YES?

BEAM
はぁぁぁ

GASP
IS THIS A CONFESSION OF LOVE?
HOW DO I...?

THAT'S GREATTT!
IS IT?

ガーン
SHOCK
かぁっ
BLUSH
THIS IS SO SUDDEN THAT I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY...

COME ON, ONLY BY TEN MINUTES.
WHUUUT?
YOU'RE LATE!!
"ONLY" !?

HRRR
GRGR...

THEY'RE LATE..
STANDING STOCK-STILL FOR ONE HOUR
"ONLY," YOU SAY!?
YOU DON'T LET UP, HUH.
WELL, I'VE BEEN HERE FOR AN ENTIRE HOUR!

SORRYYY! ☆ I FELL A LITTLE BEHIIIND.

SHINO... ARE THOSE YOUR STREET CLOTHES?
YES!

IT'S NOT LIKE SHINO AND ALICE ARE HERE YET ANYWAY.
YEAH, I KNOW.

DO YOU LIKE IT?
SHINO'S DRESSED UP AS SOMETHING SPECIFIC!
FRET FRET FRET

I'M WORRIED SICK.
WHAT IF THEY GOT INTO AN ACCIDENT OR SOMETHING ...?
WHERE WAS THE WORRY FOR ME?
JERK!

OH, I GOTCHA. IT'S A COSTUME, HUH?
LEMME GUESS... A MAID?
A GOTHIC LOLITA ...?

OH!
I AM SO SORRY WE'RE LAAATE!
THEY MADE IT...

BZZ!
THE CORRECT ANSWER IS...A FOREIGN-ER!
THAT'S NOT SPECIFIC AT ALL !!

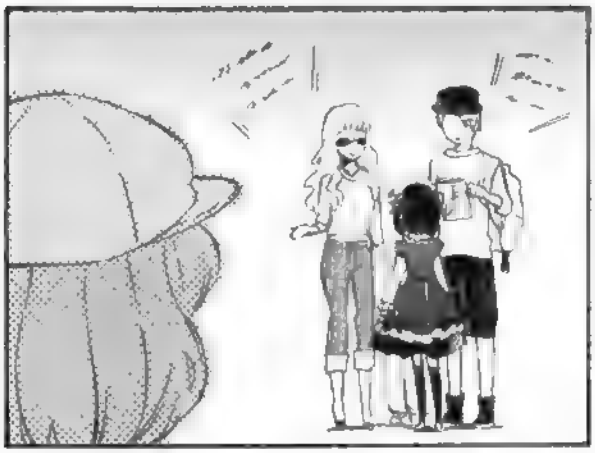
HOPE YOU WEREN'T WAITING LONG!
WHAT THE —?
FRILLY FRILLY?

OH, LOOK.
THERE ARE SOME FOREIGN-ERS.
TRAV-ELERS, MAYBE?

ACK!
LUNCH
WHAT IS IT?

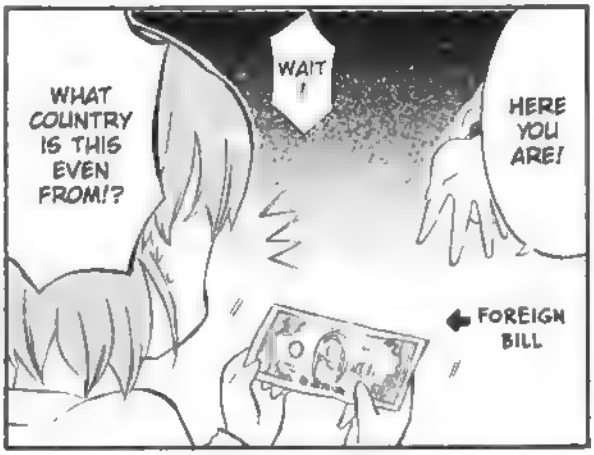
I'LL BE BACK!
THEY LOOK LIKE THEY NEED HELP ...
HUH? SHINO, WAIT!
DASH

WHAT DO I DO?
BUT WE ALREADY ATE!
I ONLY HAVE TWO HUNDRED YEN ON ME!



I'LL PAY YOU BACK TOMORROW. I SWEAR.
THANK YOU!
HOW ABOUT I LEND YOU SOME MONEY?

WHY DID SHE EVEN BOTHER?
ALIIICE!
!?
!?


WAIT!
WHAT COUNTRY IS THIS EVEN FROM!?
HERE YOU ARE!
FOREIGN BILL

YOU GOT A ZERO.
REMEMBER?
YOU HAVE TO STUDY MORE BEFORE YOU CAN GO ALL-IN...

SO, ABOUT YESTER-DAY...

I ONLY GOT A ZERO ON THAT TEST BECAUSE I FORGOT TO WRITE MY NAME ON IT!
THAT'S NOT IT!

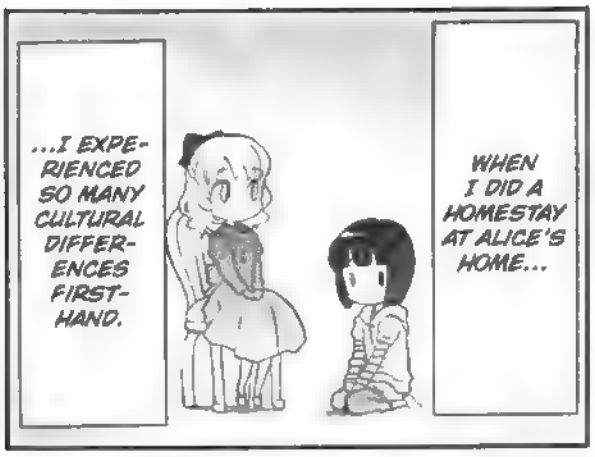
SHE'S ALWAYS BEEN INTO IT, GIVEN THAT SHE WENT ON THAT HOMESTAY.
SHE'S THE REAL DEAL!
SHINO'S LOVE FOR FOREIGN CULTURES HAS CROSSED INTO OBSESSIVE TERRITORY.

EVEN I WOULD NEVER SCORE A ZERO!
C'MON!
OHH.
I DIDN'T KNOW THAT.

YEAH. HEY, MAYBE ONE OF THESE DAYS SHINO'LL EVEN BE SPEAKING ENGLISH!
THAT'S WHAT I THINK.
IT'S ALICE'S INFLUENCE TOO.

THIRTEEN POINTS...
HAVE SOME FAITH!
YEAH, BUT EVEN IF SHE HAD PUT HER NAME, SHE'D STILL FAIL...

BUT HER FACE SAYS SHE DOESN'T UNDER-STAND A WORD!!
M-HM, M-HM.
BLANK
WAIT —!
AN ENGLISH NEWS-PAPER!?


...I EXPERIENCED SO MANY CULTURAL DIFFERENCES FIRSTHAND.
WHEN I DID A HOMESTAY AT ALICE'S HOME...

EUROPEAN?
SHINO, DO YOU LIKE EUROPEAN CULTURE?

HEY ALICE, HAS ANYTHING BEEN A PAIN SINCE COMING TO JAPAN?
SO IT REALLY IS THAT DIFFERENT?

YEAH, EUROPE, RIGHT?
I ENJOY ALL FOREIGN CULTURES, REALLY!
I LIKE ENGLAND AND FRANCE AND SO ON...
HUH?

HMM...
IT HAS TO BE TAKING OFF YOUR SHOES WHEN YOU'RE INDOORS.
SOMETIMES, I STILL ALMOST FORGET TO REMOVE THEM.

FIZZLE
UMM...
I'M STARTING TO GET LOST.
LET ME TRY PUTTING IT TO PAPER.

LIAR!!
OH, YES. THAT HAPPENS TO ME AS WELL.

YOU'RE STARTING THERE!?
WE LIVE ON PLANET EARTH!
EARTH

AYA, YOU'RE SO "OKUYUKA-SHII"— ELEGANT! VERY JAPANESE.
YOU'RE LEARNING SOME DIFFICULT WORDS.
UH-HUH!
ALICE, YOU LIVE AT SHINO'S PLACE, RIGHT?
YOU ALWAYS EXPECT FOREIGNERS TO BE OUT-SPOKEN, COMPARED TO US.
WELL, SOME-TIMES IT'S IMPORTANT TO BE BLUNT.
SHINO AND I SHARE HER ROOM, HALF AND HALF.
WANT TO SEE A PHOTO?
ACTUALLY, THERE'S SOMETHING THAT I'VE BEEN WANTING TO SAY FOR A WHILE NOW.
WHAA—!? COME ON, GET IT OFF YOUR CHEST!
OHO!
OKAY... I WILL.
YOUR SKIRT'S ZIPPER IS OPEN!
I FINALLY SAID IT!
WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY SO SOON-ER!?
UHHH, ISN'T THIS BACK-WARDS?
I LOVE JAPAN!

GOLD, UM... SOUNDS A LITTLE...
MAYBE NOT GOLDEN, BUT MORE...
A LIGHT GOLDEN BROWN.
LIKE THIS!
THAT IS THE SAME THING!

YOUKO-CHAN, DO YOU DYE YOUR HAIR?
NOPE. THIS IS ALL NATURAL.
DYEING IS AGAINST SCHOOL RULES.

BUT... THAT MIGHT JUST LOOK GREAT ON YOU!
AYA!!
SHIMMER
YOU SO DON'T BELIEVE THAT!

I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT DYEING MINE AFTER GRADUA-TION.
OH YEAH?
WHAT COLOR?

YOU WANT BLOND HAIR, SHINO?
YES!
THEN WE'LL MATCH!

GOLD
OF COURSE!

THAT WOULD LOOK DREAD-FUL ON YOU!
SO BLUNT!!
AS EXPECTED.
BLACK IS BETTER!

!

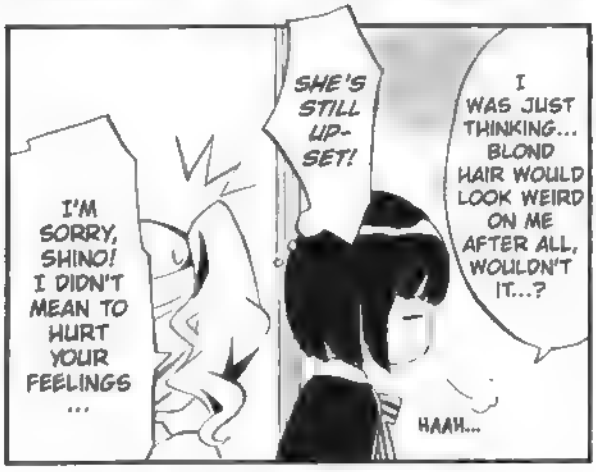
THERE, THERE.
WHAT LOOKS GOOD AND DOESN'T IS ALL SUBJECTIVE.
YEAH!
THE OUTFIT YOU WORE YESTERDAY LOOKED REEEALLY GOOD ON YOU, SHINO!

HUUUH?
しゃん
GLOOM

WHEW.
UH...
YOU REALLY THINK SO?
WAAAH!
UH-HUH!

MM...
?
WHAT'S WRONG, SHINO? YOU SEEM DOWN.

I THINK BLOND HAIR WOULD BE PERFECT WITH THAT OUTFIT!
NO ONE BUT YOU COULD PULL IT OFF SO ADORABLY!!
ENTRANCED
THAT'S WHY I WANT TO DYE MINE...


SHE'S STILL UPSET!
I WAS JUST THINKING... BLOND HAIR WOULD LOOK WEIRD ON ME AFTER ALL, WOULDN'T IT...?
I'M SORRY, SHINO! I DIDN'T MEAN TO HURT YOUR FEELINGS ...
HAAH...

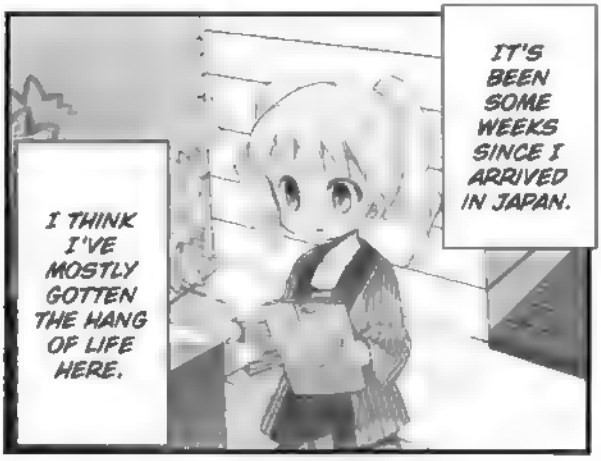
"NO" BLOND HAIR.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND HER STANDARDS!!

WHAT?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT!?
IF I WENT GOLDEN, IT MIGHT BE SO HIDEOUS THEY'D HAVE TO COVER IT UP WITH A MOSAIC!

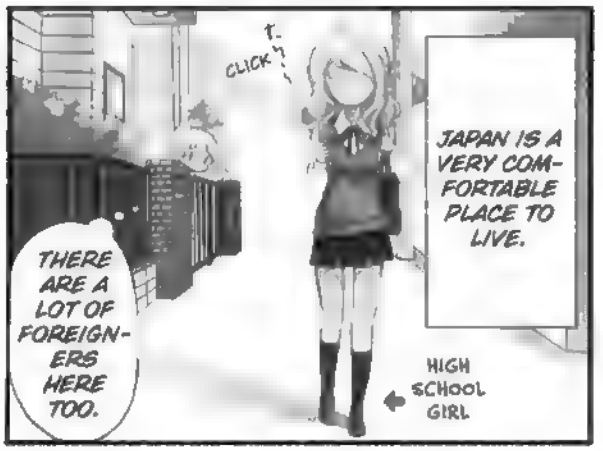
KINTAROU

NO MATTER HOW MUCH YOU CUT IT, YOU CAN ALWAYS SEE KINTAROU ON EACH SLICE!
THIS IS CALLED KINTAROU CANDY.
IS IT FUNNY?
くすくす GIGGLE GIGGLE
HEE HEE!
SO MANY SHINOS!
IT'S KINTAROU...
JAPANESE THINGS ALWAYS REMIND ME OF YOU!

ALICE! YOU NEED TO GET CHANGED!
OKAY!
THE PEOPLE AROUND ME ARE ALL SO NICE.


I THINK I'VE MOSTLY GOTTEN THE HANG OF LIFE HERE.
IT'S BEEN SOME WEEKS SINCE I ARRIVED IN JAPAN.

YAWN
THAT'S MY UNIFORM !!
I WONDER IF I PUT ON WEIGHT... MY SKIRT'S TIGHT...


CLICK
THERE ARE A LOT OF FOREIGN-ERS HERE TOO.
JAPAN IS A VERY COM-FORTABLE PLACE TO LIVE.
HIGH SCHOOL GIRL

POKE
I AM SOOO JEALOUS OF THAT SOFT PORCELAIN SKIN.

LET'S EAT BREAKFAST!
THIS IS SHINOBU OOMIYA. HER FRIENDS CALL HER SHINO.
SHE'S THE PICTURE OF IDEAL JAPANESE BEAUTY!

HUH?
ONEE-CHAN, DID YOU HAVE WORK TODAY?
MM-HM.
THIS AFTER-NOON.
ISAMI OOMIYA (SHINOBU'S BIG SISTER)

もぐもぐ CRUNCH
もぐもぐ CRUNCH
ぐるぐる TWIRL
ぐるぐる TWIRL
NATTO

BIG SIS
LITTLE SIS
ISAMI'S A MODEL.
ALTHOUGH THEY'RE SISTERS, SHINO AND ISAMI HARDLY RESEMBLE EACH OTHER.

ALICE, PLEASE DON'T SPLASH WATER... WE ONLY DO THAT IN THE SUMMER ...
SPLASH
SPLASH

OYAMA DOLL
KOKESHI DOLL
GRIN
GRIN
LIKE THIS!

I LOVE IT!!
JAPAN.
BEEEAM

THIS IS YOUKO INOKUMA. WE CALL HER YOUKO.
MORNIN'!

GOOD MORNING, AYA-CHAN!
HEY, SHINO. HI, ALICE.

YOUKO IS CHEERFUL AND ENERGETIC.
...I TAKE IT YOU DIDN'T EAT BREAKFAST?
WHA? NO, I ATE IT.

WHERE'S YOUKO-CHAN?
THIS IS AYA KOMICHI. WE CALL HER AYA.
SHE WENT ON AHEAD. SHE HAS DAY DUTY.

HER LUNCH
THEN, WHY ARE YOU...

LET'S GET GOING! WOULDN'T WANT TO BE LATE!
AYA'S BOTH SMART AND RELIABLE.
ONLY...

DON'T YOU GIVE ME THAT CLUELESS LOOK.
IT'S GOOD TO HAVE A HEALTHY APPETITE.

YOU FORGOT TO PUT ON YOUR TIGHTS!
AYA-CHAN!
...SOMETIMES, SHE'S REALLY SCATTERBRAINED.
HUH!?
BARE LEGS

SENSEI, WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO BECOME A TEACHER?
I HAVE A QUESTION!
ME?

DON'T FORGET, YOUR CAREER PATH FORMS ARE DUE TOMORROW!
THIS IS MISS KARASUMA, OUR TEACHER FOR HOMEROOM AND ENGLISH.

HMM... I WAS A TEACHER BEFORE I EVEN REALIZED WHAT HAPPENED!
I SUPPOSE I JUST WENT WITH THE FLOW?
THAT'S NOT HELPFUL!

AND SHINO'S ROLE MODEL.
SENSEI! SENSEI, LOOK OVER HEEERE!
OR MAYBE MORE...?
OKAY, I'M RETURNING YOUR TESTS FROM YESTERDAY!

BEING A STUDENT IS THE BEST TIME OF YOUR LIFE.
THE HARDEST PART...

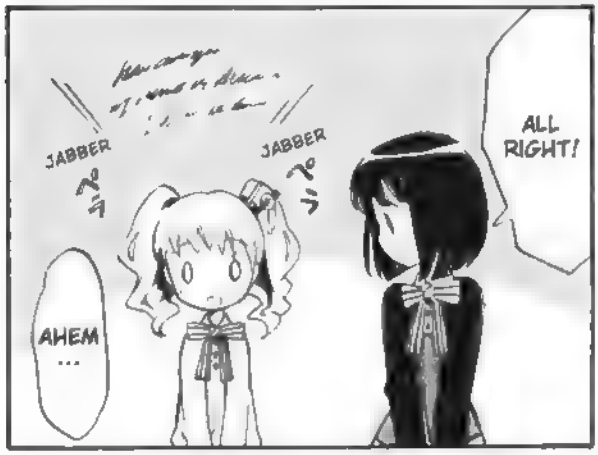
ALICE-SAN, YOU GOT A PERFECT SCORE. GREAT JOB.
LOOK RIGHT HERE.
"TAKE THAT" FACE

...IS THE STRUGGLE TO STAY AWAKE...
DAZE
UM, YOU STILL ALWAYS LOOK LIKE YOU'RE ABOUT TO CRASH!
SO SLEEPY...

I DREW A FLOWER JUST FOR YOU!
WITH A FLAG TOO!
100
SHE ALWAYS TREATS ME LIKE A LITTLE KID.

OKAY, TRANSLATE SOMETHING ALICE SAYS FROM ENGLISH!
NICE!
DON'T YOU WORRY!
I'VE BEEN PICKING UP ENGLISH FROM ALICE LATELY.

I GUESS SO.
HMM...
I GUESS YOU CAN'T BECOME A TEACHER UNLESS YOU'RE PRETTY SMART, RIGHT?
AH!


JABBER
JABBER
ALL RIGHT!
AHEM ...

I'VE KNOWN WHAT I WANTED TO BE SINCE I WAS LITTLE.
YES!
SHINO, YOU ALREADY FINISHED YOURS!?
WHAT DID YOU PUT DOWN?

JABBER
JABBER
"I..."
ERM ...

EH HEH HEH!
AN INTER-PRETER!
CAREER PATH SURVEY: YEAR 1
SHINORU OSHITA
INTERPRETER

HRGL!
PLEASE DON'T KEEP TALKING BEFORE I'VE TRANS-LATED !!
UHH...
CLASP
がばっ

NO, FOR FOR-EIGN-ERS!
MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING
OHHH... FOR ALIENS?

HMMM... YEAH.
YOUKO, HAVE YOU DECIDED?

YOU DON'T HAVE TO THINK SO HARD.
UHHH...
I'VE NEVER EVEN THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT I WANT TO DO AFTER HIGH SCHOOL.

WOW! WHAT AN INCREDIBLE DREAM!
ROAR
ROAR
I'M GONNA BECOME A POP STAR AND HAVE A BIG CONCERT AT THE BUDOKAN!

SHINO'S AMAZ-ING!
はっ
GASP
JUST ASK YOURSELF, "WHAT KIND OF PERSON DO I WANT TO BE?"

HUH?
I KNOW YOU CAN DO IT, YOUKO!
I'M ROOTING FOR YOU!

I SEE.
...I GUESS I WANT TO BE A PERSON WHO HELPS OTHERS.
I DON'T KNOW HOW EXACTLY YET, BUT ...

JAPANESE COMEDY IS HIGH-LEVEL.
YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO JUMP IN AND SAY, "IN YOUR DREAMS"!
AHAHAHAHA!
OH GEEZ, I'M KIDDING! "IT'S JAPANESE JOKE!"

YOU LEFT OUT THE MOST IMPOR-TANT PART!
かきかき
SCRIBBLE
A PERSON.
THEN, THIS IS WHAT YOU SHOULD WRITE DOWN...

YOU'VE GONE TOTALLY GIRLY-GIRL.
WHAT'S WITH YOU?
SIGH
IF THE ASSIGN-MENT WAS TO WRITE, SAY, YOUR IDEAL PROPOSAL, I COULD DO IT IN A HEART-BEAT.

FREEZE
I—
AYA! YOU SEEM LIKE YOU'D PUT...
...A WIFE.

UH-OH. I DUNNO WHAT TO SAY TO THIS.
UHHH...
BECAUSE IT'S MANLY.
I THINK STRAIGHT-FORWARD PROPO-SALS ARE BEST.

SHE SAYS, AS SHE ERAS-ES!
RUB
RUB
I WOULD NOT!

BE MY WIFE!
LIKE THAT?
BLUSH
SO FOR IN-STANCE—

IT EXISTS TO ERASE MIS-TAKES !!
OF COURSE! YOU ERASE WITH AN ERASER!

SHOVE
BLUSH
CUT IT OUT, YOU DUMMY!
OUCH!

SHE'S FIGHT-ING BACK !!
BAM
GEEZ, WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO WRITE!?

WOW!
SPEAKING OF,
ONEE-CHAN BECAME A MODEL AFTER SHE WAS APPROACHED ON THE STREET BY A SCOUT.
SHE DID?

DID YOU FINISH THE CAREER PATH HANDOUT?
WE HAVE UNTIL TOMORROW, SO I'M GOING TO TAKE A LITTLE MORE TIME TO THINK ABOUT IT.

I GUESS THAT IS ONE WAY TO START A CAREER, ISN'T IT...?
MUMBLE MUMBLE
OH!
IT WAS RIGHT AROUND THIS AREA, SHE SAID.

WHAT SHOULD I WRITE DOWN...?
はっ
GASP
DAZE
ぼー
A SORROWFUL PROFILE ...

THEN... THEN I MIGHT GET SCOUTED TOO!
EEEK!
OH, RIGHT! SOME PEOPLE SCOUT OUT THE SCOUTERS!

ALICE!
IF YOU MISS ENGLAND, YOU KNOW YOU CAN ALWAYS TELL ME, OKAY!?
HUH?

HUH?
DIDN'T YOU TWO LEAVE SCHOOL EARLIER THAN US?
20 MINUTES LATER
ぼー
DAZE

I CAN LOAN YOU MY TREASURE: THE COMPLETE BOOK OF ENGLISH FOLK SONGS!
I WAS JUST THINKING ABOUT MY CAREER GOALS!

WHAT'S THAT BAG FOR, AYA?
IT'S MY TRACK-SUIT. WE HAVE GYM NEXT.
OH, THAT'S SMART. YOU WON'T FORGET THEM IF YOU CAN LOOK AT THEM.
ALICE? WHAT ARE YOU WRITING DOWN?
OHH, OKAY!
...IS WHAT THAT WORD MEANS.
AND YOU EVEN WROTE IT DOWN.
I FORGOT !!
ジャージ TRACKSUIT
...I WRITE THEM DOWN SO I'LL REMEMBER THEM!
WHEN I HEAR DIFFICULT JAPANESE WORDS AT SCHOOL ...

IT'S OKAY, ALICE!!
YOU CAN BE PRETTY SCATTER-BRAINED, ALICE...
ON MY FIRST DAY OF GYM CLASS IN JAPAN...
I LEFT IT BY THE FRONT DOOR SPECIFIC-ALLY SO I WOULDN'T FORGET!
N-NUH !?
BAM
FROM HER HIGH SCHOOL YEARS
IN TIMES OF CRISIS, WE HAVE KARASU-CHAN'S TRACK JACKET!
NOW THAT YOU MEN-TION IT...
YOU LIVE TOGETHER AND ALL.
HEY, WAIT...
SHINO, DIDN'T YOU NOTICE?
... SHE'S OUR TEACH-ER...
B-BUT ...
YOU STOOD BY AND LET IT HAPPEN !?
I DID WONDER WHY ALICE DIDN'T BRING HER TRACKSUIT EVEN THOUGH WE HAVE GYM TODAY.
W-WAIT, SENSEI !?
NO ONE WILL NOTICE!
BAM
IT'S OKAY! THE DESIGN IS ALMOST UNCHANGED FROM WHEN I USED TO GO HERE!
IT'S NOT A SWIMSUIT!
WELL, I THOUGHT THAT SHE MIGHT'VE BEEN WEARING IT UNDER HER UNIFORM.

DO YOU HEAR YOURSELF?
DON'T SIT ON THE SIDELINES.
GYM CLASS SHOULD BE OUTLAWED IN THIS DAY AND AGE.

NOW I HAVE THE TOP, BUT I STILL DON'T HAVE ANY BOTTOMS ...

WHAT WOULD I DO WITHOUT IT, HUH?
I'M THE KIND OF CHARACTER WHO EXCELS AT ATHLETICS.

THIS IS NOT OKAY!
WHAAAT?!
I AGREE. IT LOOKS COMPLETELY NATURAL!
LIKE AN OVER-SIZED SHIRT.
IT'S FINE. YOU CAN GET AWAY WITHOUT THEM!

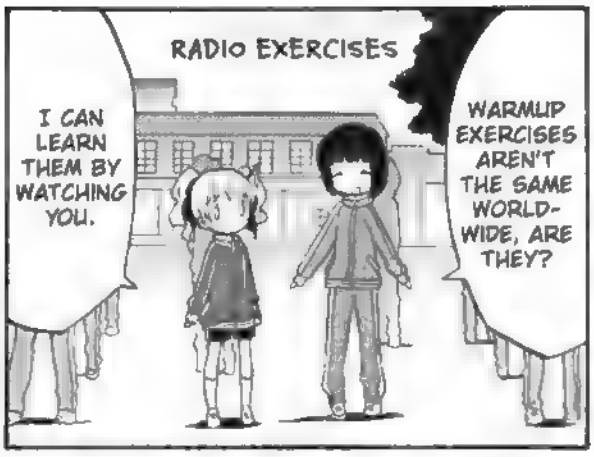
HUH!?
WHAT?

OH!
I HAVE MY SUMMER GYM SHORTS WITH ME!
ぺろーん
TA-DAA
THAT'S THE TICKET!

WE'VE BEEN FRIENDS SINCE MIDDLE SCHOOL ...
LOOK, YOU...
NONE AT ALL!
I HAD NO IDEA YOU HAD THAT REDEEMING TRAIT!

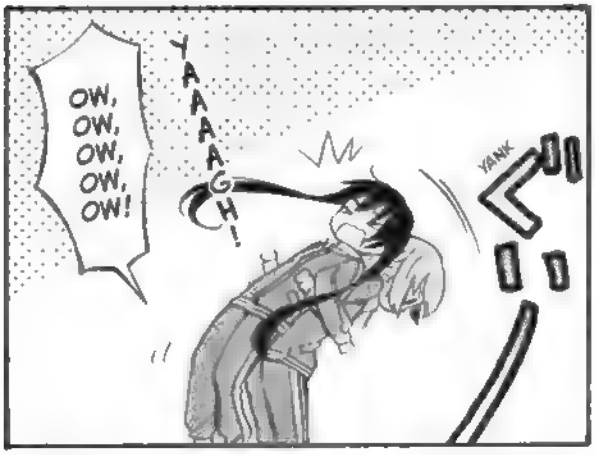
ビュオオ
FWOOO
ガヤ
CHATTER ガヤ
CHATTER
FWEEET
ピピー
EVERYONE GATHER UP!
S-SO COLD...

STRAN
STRAN
OW! OW! STOO-OOP!
HNNN-NG...


RADIO EXERCISES
I CAN LEARN THEM BY WATCHING YOU.
WARMUP EXERCISES AREN'T THE SAME WORLD-WIDE, ARE THEY?

STRETCHES
HFF! HFF!
I'M JUST NOT FLEXIBLE, OKAY? DON'T PUSH SO HARD!
STOP MAKING WEIRD NOISES.

HUH ...? BUT...
NO!
BOOM
DO THE ROUTINE YOU'RE USED TO. I INSIST!


OW, OW, OW, OW, OW!
YAAAAGH!
YANK

I CALL IT: MULTI-CULTURAL RADIO EXER-CISE!
WE WILL MERGE THE EXER-CISES OF OUR TWO COUNTRIES TOGETH-ER.
R-REALLY?

THIS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH BEING FLEXIBLE !!
OH, SHUT UP.
UNCLE! UNCLE!
TAP
TAP

?
WHAT IN THE HECK ARE THEY DOING?
INTER-PRE-TIVE DANCE ...?

YEESH, AYA, YOU'RE AS SLOW AS YOU LOOK.
I'M GOING ON AHEAD!
TODAY, I'LL BE TIMING YOU IN THE 1,100 YARD RUN!
AWWW!
1,100 YARDS ...!?
OH YEAH, WHERE ARE SHINO AND ALICE?
LOOKING FOR FELLOW SUFFERERS
WE CAN ALL RUN TOGETHER!
WHAT'S THE POINT OF RUNNING THAT MUCH?
I DON'T WANT TO!
I WONDER HOW MANY SECONDS IT TAKES?
SEC-ONDS !?
WHAT COULD WE POSSIBLY GET OUT OF IT!?
SLOW!!
HFF! HFF!
LAG LAG
PUTTING ALICE ASIDE... SHINO...
I SHOULD HAVE STAYED HOME TODAY...
C'MON, DON'T GIVE UP BEFORE YOU EVEN BEGIN.
PAT
SLUMP
SHE'S GOING SO SLOW...
...BUT SHE'S NOT OUT OF BREATH AT ALL ...!?
HFF! HUFF!
THE FINISH LINE LIES AT THE END OF YOUR SUFFER-ING!
UGH, YOU'RE SUFFO-CATING!
YA KNOW !?

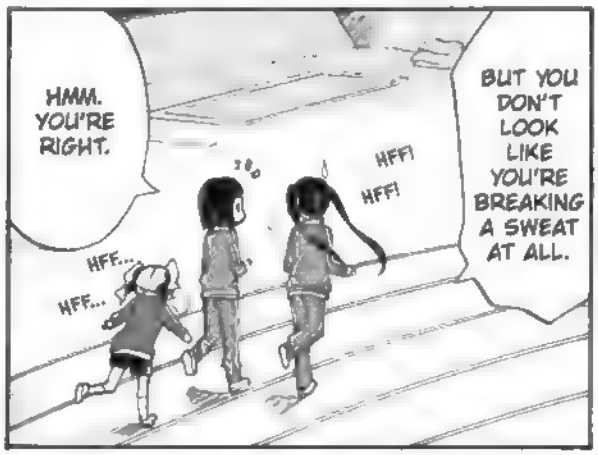
SH... SHINO...
YES?
TMP
TMP
TMP

SHINO!
OH!
AYA-CHAN!
I THINK IT'S ACTUALLY LESS TIRING TO RUN AT YOUR OWN PACE, IF YOU CAN.
TMP
TMP
TMP

HFF!
HFF!
LEA...
ME... GO...
HFF!
...ON...
AHEA...
EH?
TRANSLATION ➡ "LEAVE ME, GO ON AHEAD"

THIS IS MY MAXIMUM SPEED.
REALLY !?
OH, BUT I CAN'T RUN ANY FASTER THAN THIS.

OH NO!
AYA-CHAN! ALICE, SHE...!
WHEEZE!
WHEEZE!


HMM. YOU'RE RIGHT.
BUT YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE YOU'RE BREAKING A SWEAT AT ALL.
HFF!
HFF!
HFF...
HFF...

I'M NOT...!
"ONCE MORE, PLEASE"?
SHE'S SAYING SOME-THING IN ENGLISH!
HFF!
HFF!

WHAT'S WITH YOUR STAMINA !!?
I THINK I COULD MAINTAIN THIS PACE FOR TWO OR THREE HOURS.

HFF!
HFF!
THE FLUTTER CHANT IS WORKING!
RUNNER'S HIGH!?
WOW! I'M STARTING TO FEEL LIKE I COULD RUN ANYWHERE!

I KNOW!
I CAN TEACH YOU A SPELL TO ALLEVIATE YOUR EXHAUSTION.
A WHAT!?

YEAH!
IT'S THE LAST STRETCH! YOU CAN DO IT!

MARCH
MARCH
MARCH
MARCH
LET'S SEE... WHAT WAS IT...?
BASEBALL TEAM
FI...
FLI...
THE SPORTS TEAMS OFTEN USE IT, SO I'M SURE IT MUST WORK!

ALMOST THERE!
ALMOST THERE!
MAYBE IT'S MY IMAGINATION, BUT MY FEET FEEL SO LIGHT ...!
JUST RUN LIKE NORMAL!
WE COULD SKIP TO THE FINISH LINE!

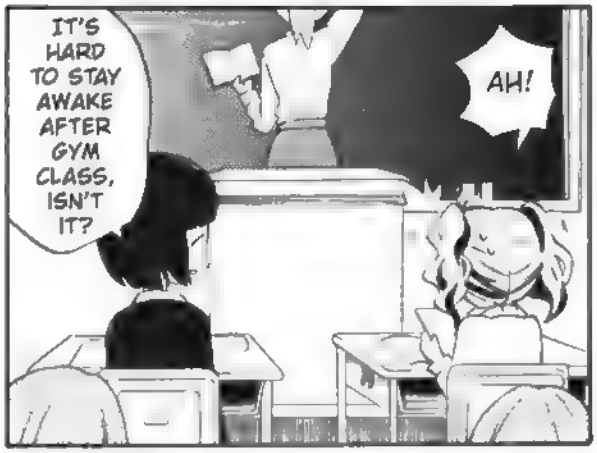
FLUTTER!
YES, THAT WAS IT! FLUTTER!
FIGHT-O
FLUTTER!?

ALICE!!
がくーん
COLLAPSE
SET THEM UP HERSELF
YOU'RE SO PUMPED, ALICE, THE LAST FIFTY-FIVE YARDS HAVE HURDLES NOW.

WHAT'S WITH THOSE TWO, FLUTTERING AROUND?
F... FLUTTER, FLUTTEER!
FLUTTER, FLUTTER!
REPEAT AFTER ME!
FINISHED AGES AGO

NEXT CLASS
ALICE?
NOD
NOD
MATH

FINALLY AT THE FINISH LINE
YOU GUYS ARE WIPED OUT...
HFF!
HFF!
HFF!


IT'S HARD TO STAY AWAKE AFTER GYM CLASS, ISN'T IT?
AH!

URGH ...
YOU OKAY, ALICE?

I'M OKAY!
HUH!?
WOULD YOU LIKE PERMISSION TO TAKE A LITTLE NAP?

...FOR TIMES LIKE THIS...
SLIP
I THINK I HAVE JUST THE RIGHT WORD...
NOTEBOOK

I'D SLEEP HERE!?
CLATTER
SENSEI! MAY I GO GET A FUTON FROM THE NURSE'S OFFICE?

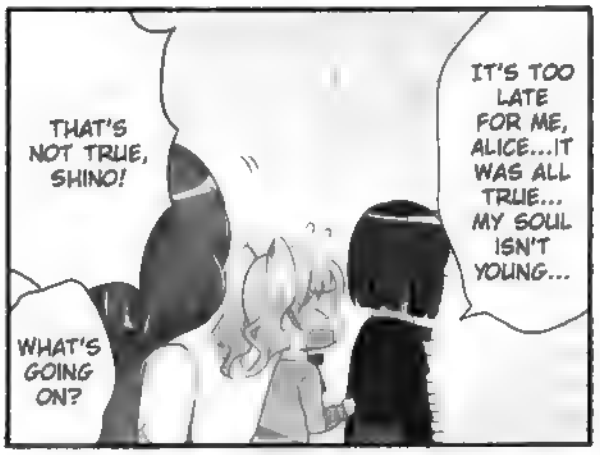
CLOSE ENOUGH.
HMM...
DOES IT FIT ...?
OKAY
OKAY

IT WASN'T THAT LONG AGO THAT WE WERE IN MIDDLE SCHOOL ...
FOURTEEN OR FIFTEEN?
YA KNOW, I ACTUALLY WOULDN'T BE SURPRISED IF YOU SAID YOU WERE, LIKE, THIRTY OR SOMETHING!
BWAH HA!

HOW OLD WOULD YOU SAY I LOOK?

'COS YOU'VE GOT THIS CALMNESS ABOUT Y—
WHAT THE —!?
YOUKO, WHAT HAVE YOU DONE!?

? YOU LOOK LIKE A HIGH SCHOOL-ER.
NO, I MEAN PURELY BY PHYSICAL APPEAR-ANCE! IGNORE THE UNIFORM.



↑ TURNED SIXTEEN

THANK YOU!
HERE, YOU CAN HAVE MY JUICE.
IT'S A REFERENCE BOOK.
THIS IS FOR YOU!

A BONSAI TREE? OUCH.
SNIFFLE
SHE REALLY SAID THAT ...?

THE GIFT OF SONG?
WAAH!
I DON'T HAVE A PRESENT... BUT I CAN SING FOR YOU!

BUT I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'D DO WITH A BONSAI TREE.
I'M JEALOUS!
BUT BONSAI TREES ARE SUPER-VALUABLE, YOU KNOW!?

TANJOUBI
OMEDETO...
TANJOUBI
OMEDETO...

WHAT WOULD YOU DO WITH A TREE?
THIS
IF I HAD TO PICK ANY KIND OF TREE, I'D ASK FOR A FIR.

WHY WON'T YOU SING IN ENG-LISH FOR ME!?
SHE'S TRANSLAT-ING "HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU" INTO JAPANESE.
WHAT SONG IS THAT?

AH, NOW IT MAKES SENSE.
SIGH...
TWINKLE
IF I HAD A FIR, EVERY DAY WOULD BE CHRIST-MAS!

YOU TEND TO BE FORMAL WITH EVERYONE, YOU KNOW?
MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE OF HOW YOU SPEAK.
BY THE WAY...
UMMM, BASI-CALLY...
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HAVE AN "OLD SOUL"?
I SEE! ALL RIGHT, I'LL ATTEMPT TO SPEAK MORE CASUALLY!
LIKE A HIGH SCHOOL GIRL!
OKAY.
I AM NOT OLD!!
IT JUST MEANS YOU'RE OLD!
LIKE, DO YOU KNOW HOW TALL THE EIFFEL TOWER IIIS?
IT'S 1,063 FEET TAAALL.
YOU'RE LIKE THE PICTURE OF YOUTH! YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE A HIGH SCHOOLER AT ALL!
DO I HAVE A YOUNG SOUL?
NO. WAY. SHUT UP, GIRL!
...HOW WAS THAT?
THAT'S ... NOT QUITE IT...
ALICE... DON'T BE HAPPY ABOUT THAT...
YAAAY!

WAIT, IF WE'RE GOING TO DO A PHOTO SHOOT...

MAYBE YOU'VE GOT THE MAKINGS OF A MODEL IN YOU TOO.
YOU AND ISA-NEE HAVE THE SAME BLOOD RUNNING THROUGH YOU.

WHY!?
...SHE NEEDS TO CHANGE INTO A SWIMSUIT.

OKAY!
LET'S TRY TAKING A PHOTO!
I'M NOT SURE...
SHE TAKES AFTER OUR MOTHER, WHILE I TAKE AFTER OUR FATHER.

OH. REALLY? I THOUGHT SHE WAS, LIKE, A GLAMOUR MODEL.
MY SISTER IS A FASHION MODEL.
SHE DOESN'T MODEL SWIMSUITS.
HUUUH.

LET ME HUNKER DOWN HERE.
AH. ALL RIGHT.
SHINO, YOU SIT HERE.

TCH?
TCH!

WHAT?

カシャ
SNAP
M HM.
I LIKE TO LOOK AT THE SHAPE A BODY'S SILHOUETTE MAKES.
カシャ
SNAP
HMMM...
A MUSCLE FETISH?
FLESHY FETISH?
WHAT KIND OF FETISH WOULD YOU CALL THAT?
カシャ
SNAP
EVERYBODY HAS MUSCLES! WE COULD EVEN SEE A LITTLE MUSCLE ON YOU IF YOU TOOK YOUR CLOTHES OFF!
BUT IDOLS DON'T HAVE MUSCLES.
AWWW!
BUT SHE'LL NEVER BE A MODEL.
SHE'S GOT A GREAT SMILE ...
HUH? WHAT DID I DO?
YOU... PERVERT !!
BLUUUSH

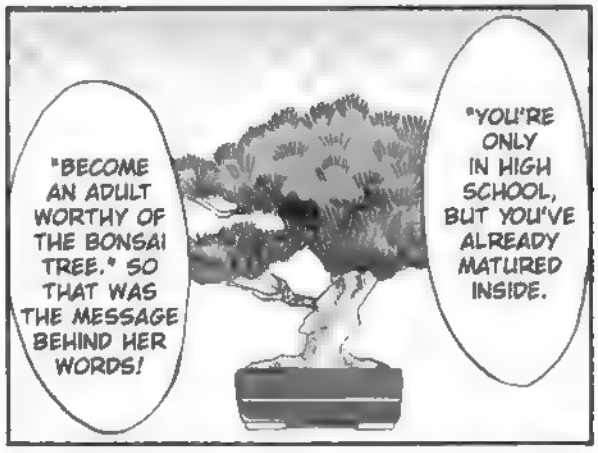
OH, GEEZ...
I REALLY SHOULD GIVE YOU A REAL PRESENT AFTER ALL.
IT'S OKAY! YOUR SENTI-MENTS ARE ENOUGH.

IT DOESN'T MATTER IF SHE'S YOUTHFUL OR NOT. SHINO IS SHINO!
AND THAT'S FINAL!
"HAPPY BIRTHDAY, SHINO"!

AFTER ALL, TO ME, BEING ABLE TO SPEND TIME WITH YOU...
...IS THE BEST PRESENT I COULD ASK FOR!

I BET ISAMI ONLY MEANT YOU'RE MATURE.
OHH!
IT SOUNDS SO DIF-FERENT WHEN YOU PUT IT THAT WAY!

YEAH, YEAH...
SHINO...


"YOU'RE ONLY IN HIGH SCHOOL, BUT YOU'VE ALREADY MATURED INSIDE.
"BECOME AN ADULT WORTHY OF THE BONSAI TREE." SO THAT WAS THE MESSAGE BEHIND HER WORDS!

BUT...
...IF YOU INSIST ON GIVING ME SOME-THING, I'LL TAKE A STRAND OF YOUR HAIR!
BLOND HAIR...
ぞわっ
SHIVER
HFF!
HFF!
YOU'RE SCAR-ING ME!

THANK YOU, ONEE-CHAN...!
YIKES.
THAT'S THINKING WAY TOO POSITIVE ...!!

AH!
A BONSAI TREE!!
(REPLICA)
THEY HAD THESE TOO, SO I BOUGHT ONE FOR ALICE.

I BOUGHT ...
...YOUR BIRTHDAY PRESENT.

I KNOW. I JUST BOUGHT IT BECAUSE I KNEW YOU'D LIKE IT.
MOVED
I CAN REALLY HAVE THIS!? IT'S NOT EVEN MY BIRTHDAY ...

GO AHEAD, OPEN IT.
THANK YOU SO MUCH!
WHAT!? THIS IS FOR ME!?

OH MY.
GLOMP
ISAM!! THANK YOUUU!!

A COMPLETELY OUT OF SEASON SNOW GLOBE.
WAH! A SNOW GLOBE!
I CAN REALLY HAVE THIS? IT LOOKS LIKE IT WAS EXPENSIVE!

I CAN'T COMPETE WITH MY SISTER.
What? She stole Alice from you?
YEEEK!
YEEEK!

IT'S SO WELL-MADE !!
I GOT IT AT A HUNDRED-YEN STORE.

BLOOD TYPE

AYA, YOUR BLOOD TYPE IS "A," RIGHT?
YEAH.
WHAT'S YOURS? "O"?
YUP, YUP!
!
THEY SAY "A"S AND "O"S ARE PRETTY COMPATI-BLE!
...
O-OH REALLY ...?
I'M AN "A" AS WELL.
ME TOO!
WOW!

CHIRP
CHIRP
LOOK AT THAT GORGEOUS WEATHER!

GOOD MORN-IIING!
MORNING, SHINO!

BACK TO SLEEP
SNOOORE

SHINO, YOUR HAIR IS SO STRAIGHT AND PRETTY.
IT'S SMOOTH AND SILKY!
OH, YEAH?

OH!

I THINK ALICE'S HAIR IS PRETTIER.
MUST BE NICE TO BE A NATURAL BLOND.

PLEASE ALLOW ME TO DO YOUR HAIR TODAY!
OKAY!

YOU KNOW, IT SORT OF REMINDS ME OF A TOY POODLE'S DROOPY EARS.
I'VE THOUGHT THAT SINCE WE FIRST MET.

HOORAY!
BRUSH

IF IT WERE BLACK, DON'T YOU THINK IT WOULD LOOK LIKE KELP?
SMOOTH AND SILKY HAIR... MUST BE NICE...
IT'S NOT THAT SHINY. IT'S MORE FLUFFY!

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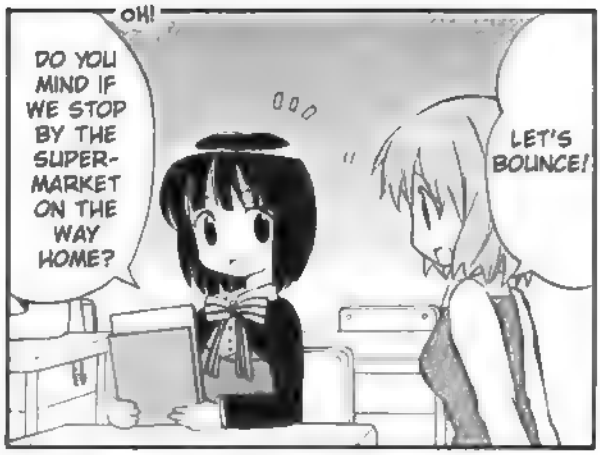

OH!
DO YOU MIND IF WE STOP BY THE SUPER-MARKET ON THE WAY HOME?
LET'S BOUNCE!

PSST.
IN CLASS
FROM YOUKO.

NO PROB!
MY MOM ASKED ME TO PICK UP SOME INGREDI-ENTS FOR DINNER.
WHAT'S FOR EATS TODAY?

YOU KNOW HOW WE WERE TALKING ABOUT HAIR? I FORGOT TO MENTION SOMETHING.

HAYASHI-SAN'S GOHAN!

YOU HAVE A SERIOUS CASE OF BEDHEAD IN THE BACK TODAY!

AND WHAT'S MORE, WE'RE HAVING CURRY RICE TODAY!
WHY DID YOU TRANS-LATE IT?
OH, YOU MEAN "HAYASHI RICE"?
UH-HUH!

CAN IT WAIT UNTIL AFTER I FIX MY HAIR!?
FOR THE NEXT PROB-LEM... KOMICHI-SAN.
FLUTTER

HNNG...
STILL NOT QUITE USED TO JAPAN?
AS THEY SAY, EXPERIENCE IS EVERYTHING!

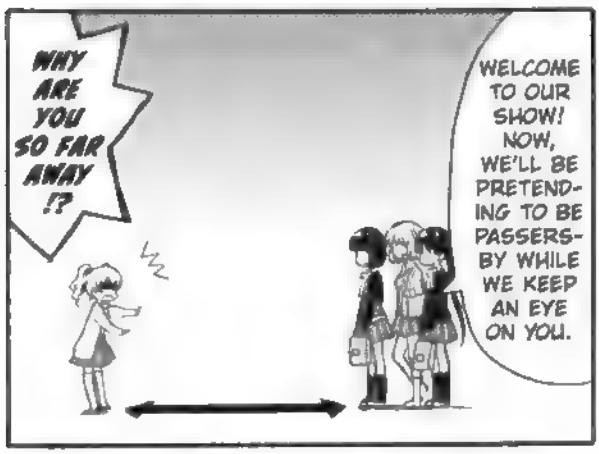
OH, SHINOBU-CHAN! HOW NICE TO SEE YOU!
HELLO, MA'AM!

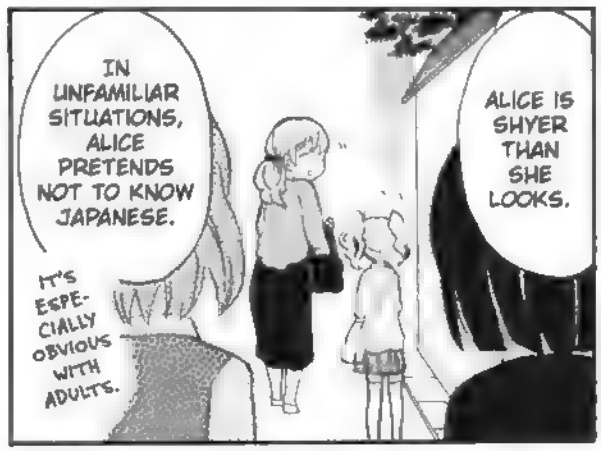
ALL RIGHT! TODAY, ALICE WILL DO THE SHOPPING ON HER OWN!
GOOD IDEA!
HUH !?

THAT'S OUR NEXT-DOOR NEIGHBOR MATSUGI-SAN.
AND HELLO TO YOU AS WELL, ALICE-CHAN!

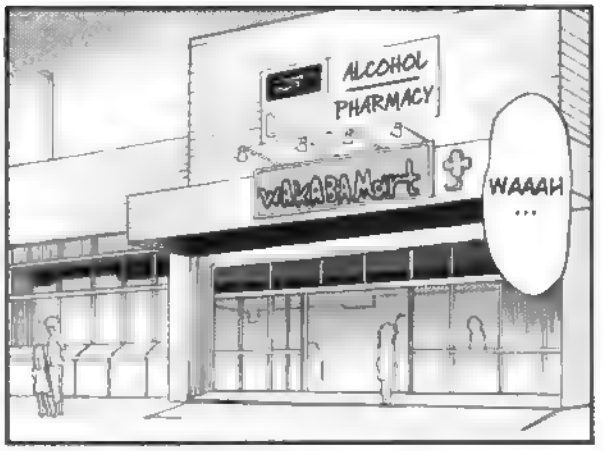
ALICE'S FIRST ERRAND
IT'S TIME FOR ...

KO-NI-CHI-WA.


WELCOME TO OUR SHOW! NOW, WE'LL BE PRETEND-ING TO BE PASSERS-BY WHILE WE KEEP AN EYE ON YOU.
WHY ARE YOU SO FAR AWAY !?


ALICE IS SHYER THAN SHE LOOKS.
IN UNFAMILIAR SITUATIONS, ALICE PRETENDS NOT TO KNOW JAPANESE.
IT'S ESPE-CIALLY OBVIOUS WITH ADULTS.

PUT EVERY-THING ON THE LIST INTO THE BASKET, OKAY?
HERE'S YOUR SHOPPING LIST!


ALCOHOL
PHARMACY
WAAAH ...

TH—
THANKS!
THIS SHOULD BE SIMPLER TO UNDERSTAND.
SINCE MOM'S LIST MIGHT HAVE BEEN A LITTLE HARD TO READ...
...I REWROTE IT JUST FOR YOU!

BADUM
BADUM
IS IT?
THIS IS MY FIRST TIME INSIDE A JAPANESE SUPER-MARKET!

BEAM
SHINO'S SO SWEET ...

ALICE'S... WE'LL HAVE TO KEEP OUR VOICES DOWN...
WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT A FIRST TIME?

CURRY
X1 BOX
X1 BAG
X1 BAG
X1 BAG

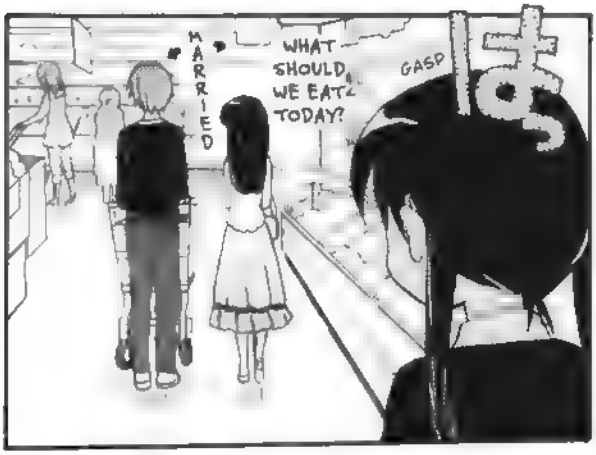
WHAT CAN'T YOU SAY IN FRONT OF ME !?
YES, REALLY!
WHOA, DID ALICE REALLY ...?
HEY!
WHAT ARE THEY TALKING ABOUT !?

IT'S MY TURN TO COOK DINNER, SO I MIGHT AS WELL SHOP NOW.
YOU SHOP-PING TOO, AYA?
LOOK AT YOU GO!

I DO STILL HAVE SOME WORK TO DO. I JUST POPPED OUT FOR A LITTLE SNACK.
YOU CAUGHT ME!
WHOA! KARASU-CHAN!? SHOULDN'T YOU BE AT SCHOOL?

LOOK, I'M NOT...
I SURE COULD GO FOR SOME HAMBURG STEAK TODAY.

IT'S OKAY!
YOU KNOW, YOU'RE GONNA GET FAT, SNACKING BETWEEN MEALS!


MARRIED
WHAT SHOULD WE EAT TODAY?
GASP

IT'S TOFU!

WHERE DID THAT COME FROM !?
L-LOOK HERE, YOU AND I ARE JUST FRIENDS!

SHE EVEN HAS SOY SAUCE TOO...
WHO SNACKS ON TOFU...!?

WHAAAT
BUT I'D RATHER BE WITH YOU, SHINO!
OPEN UNTIL ??
YOU CAME ALL THE WAY TO JAPAN, SO YOU SHOULD FEEL FREE TO CHECK OUT PLACES BY YOURSELF, YOU KNOW.

YAAAY!
I GOT EVERY-THING ON THE LIST!

COME TO THINK OF IT, YOU NEVER SAID WHY YOU'RE STUDYING ABROAD.
ALICE...

YOU GAINED A LOT OF EXPE-RIENCE SHOPPING TODAY!!
YOU DID IT, ALICE!

'COS I WANTED TO GO TO THE SAME HIGH SCHOOL AS SHINO, OI!

STOCKS !!
HECK, YOU COULD BUY ANYTHING NOW!
LIKE WHAT?

JUST HOW MUCH LOVE DOES SHINO GET!?
YOU FLEW ACROSS THE OCEAN FOR SUCH A CASUAL REASON !?

STALKS...?
I JUST WANTED TO TRY SAYING THAT.
AH HA HA HA!
DON'T.

WE'RE HOME!
ぼろっ
TATTERED
I THINK I'VE MOSTLY ADJUSTED TO JAPAN NOW!
FROM ONE SHOPPING TRIP ...?
THANKS FOR PUSHING ME TO SHOP BY MYSELF.
IT WAS A BATTLE THAT COULDN'T BE WON... HERE ARE THE GROCERIES.
MOM
ALICE-CHAN! WHAT HAPPENED!?
BUT I THINK I'M FEELING READY!
ACTUALLY, THERE'S ONE THING THAT HASN'T BEEN WORKING OUT FOR ME.
HUH...? THIS IS STEW MIX...
THANKS, GIRLS.
はっ
GASP
ALICE... IT CAN'T BE...
IS THERE SOMEBODY YOU DON'T GET ALONG WITH?
SHE'S ADJUSTING THE SHOPPING LIST!
IT'S TOO SPICY.
I FORGOT TO MENTION THAT I'M NOT A BIG FAN OF CURRY...
じりっ
SHIMMY
GRRRR...
...THAT DOG WON'T ADJUST TO ANYONE BUT HIS MASTER !!
YOU CAN'T! NO MATTER HOW MUCH YOU ADJUST TO JAPAN...
INU : FEROCIOUS

DON'T TELL ME ...
はっ
GASP

YOU SEEM DOWN.
WHAT'S THE MATTER, ALICE?

NO, I DON'T!
パシャッ
SNAP
...YOU WANT ME TO TAKE PHOTOS OF YOU!

ARE THOSE PHOTOS FROM ENGLAND?
AH!

IS IT TRUE, ALICE!?
ANY NORMAL PERSON COULD SEE SHE'S HOME-SICK.
URGH!
SIGH
I WONDER WHY?
ALICE SEEMS DOWN...
EVEN DIRECT FLIGHTS BETWEEN ENGLAND AND JAPAN ARE TWELVE HOURS LONG.
AND IT WOULD TAKE TIME TO ARRANGE TOO...
IT'D BE, LIKE, ZOOOOM!
JUST JUMP ON A PLANE AND VISIT HOME! IT WOULD TAKE NO TIME AT ALL!
THAT HAS TO BE A HINT.
OHHH...?
SHE'S LOOKING AT A PHOTO ALBUM FROM ENGLAND ...
FOR REAL !?
THE ANSWER IS...
JET LAG!
KUUUH!?
ゴゴゴゴゴ
RUMBLE
WAIT, CAN'T AIRPLANES, LIKE, WARP THROUGH CLOUDS!?
UM, I'VE BEEN IN JAPAN FOR QUITE A WHILE NOW...
I'LL GIVE YOU SOME AROMA-THERAPY OILS THAT WORK WONDERS FOR JET LAG!

⬆ NEVER BEEN ON A PLANE

IT'S OKAY. I FEEL BETTER NOW!
SORRY FOR WORRYING YOU...

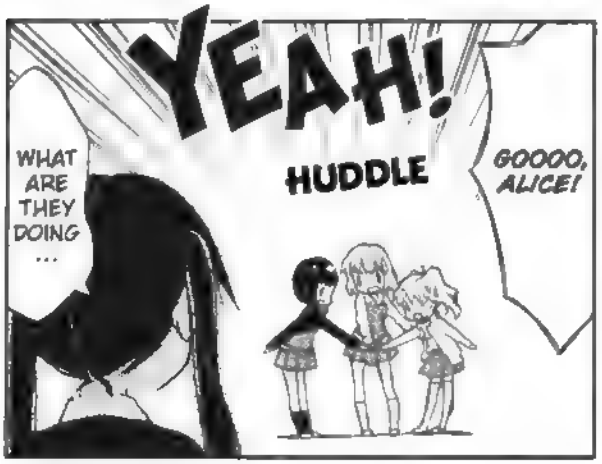
IT'S HER MOM, SHINO.
"MUM"!? THAT SOUNDS DELICIOUS!
YESTERDAY, I SPOKE TO MY MUM ON THE PHONE, AND I STARTED TO MISS HER.

OH, ALICE... YOU'RE SUCH A GOOD GIRL!
SNIFFLE
HUG
I HAVE ALL OF YOU, SO EVERY DAY IS LOTS OF FUN.

STARTING TODAY, I'LL BE YOUR MOTHER!
I KNOW WHAT YOU NEED!

WE CAN OVERCOME ANYTHING TOGETHER!
YEAH!
YEAH! WE'RE NOT ALONE!
TOUCH

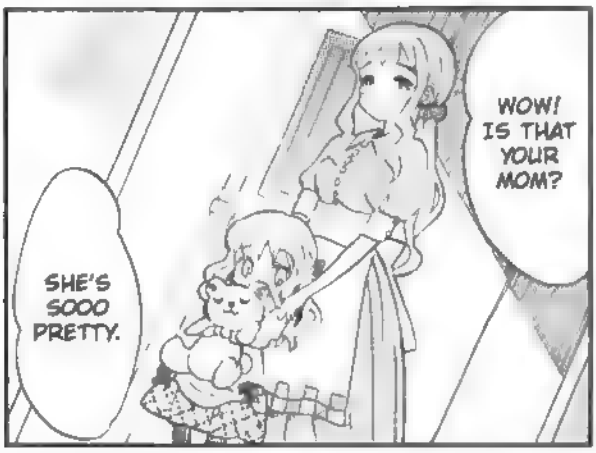
HER DOG.
I THINK.
WHO'S THAT!?
I HOPE POPPY'S HAPPY...


YEAH!
HUDDLE
WHAT ARE THEY DOING ...
GOOOO, ALICE!

WOOF WOOF!!
W—

UH-HUH!
CAN I LOOK AT YOUR PHOTO ALBUM?

REAL-LY? WOW!
...I COULD SPEAK TO YOU IN ENGLISH FROM TIME TO TIME.
IF IT WOULD HELP YOU FEEL MORE AT HOME ...


SHE'S SOOO PRETTY.
WOW! IS THAT YOUR MOM?

"A" ...
UH-HUH!
ALICE, YOU LOVE JAPA-NESE-STYLE FRIED EGGS, RIGHT?
I'LL GIVE YOU A PIECE.

VA-VOOM
ぼ
ば
ー
ん

"EN" ...
NEXT PERIOD IS ENG-LISH!
SHINO, YOU ARE SUCH A KARASU-CHAN FAN.
ENGLISH

YOU THINK? NO ONE'S EVER TOLD ME THAT BEFORE.
...SO YOU TAKE AFTER YOUR DAD, THEN?

WHY'D SHE EVEN OFFER SOME-THING LIKE THAT!?
UH
UH
ACK!
AYA-CHAN, SHE ...!!

THIS IS THE SPOT WHERE WE GO FISHING, AT THE RIVER NEAR MY HOUSE.

A PHOTO FROM SHINO'S HOMESTAY.

I GUESS WE NEVER WENT WHEN YOU WERE THERE.
THERE'S LOTS OF FISH TO CATCH!
WOW...
THERE WAS A RIVER?

I WONDER WHAT ALICE'S HOUSE IS LIKE?
I'D LIKE TO GO OVERSEAS AT LEAST ONCE IN MY LIFE TOO.

I GUESS THE ALICE I KNOW ...
...IS ONLY A FRACTION OF THE WHOLE PICTURE ...

FANTASIZING
A CASTLE FLOATING ABOVE A LAKE...ITS PRINCESS'S NAME: ALICE...
A BAREFOOT ALICE RUNNING THROUGH THE MIDDLE OF A FIELD...

DON'T MAKE ME SOUND LIKE A VILLAIN !!
I FEEL AS THOUGH ALICE'S DARK SIDE IS COMING INTO FOCUS...

NO IT'S NOT!
ARE YOU EVEN LOOKING AT THE PHOTOS?
THAT'S PRETTY MUCH IT, YES.

DROOP
IT HURTS A BIT...
WHY!?
YOU HAVE ENGLISH FRIENDS. I HAD NO IDEA ...

KAREN'S FATHER IS MY JAPANESE TEACHER BACK HOME.
COOL.
HER NAME'S KAREN, AND HER DAD'S HALF-JAPANESE.

SHE'S MY FRIEND IN ENGLAND.
WHO'S SHE?

ALICE'S BLOND FRIEND...
IF I BECAME FRIENDS WITH HER TOO...
IF YOU EVER MET, I KNOW YOU'D BE FRIENDS WITH HER TOO, SHINO.

UH-HUH!
...A FRIEND !?
YOUR FRIEND !?

AND SHE'S BACK.
...I COULD HAVE A BLOND ON EACH ARM!
BEAM

"YES"!
"FRIEND" !?

OH!
THE RAIN STOPPED.
YOU'RE RIGHT!

THANKS FOR LETTING US LOOK THROUGH THIS. IT WAS FUN.
EVERY-ONE, SHOW ME YOUR PHOTO ALBUMS NEXT TIME, OKAY?

MAYBE IT WAS THE RAIN GETTIN' YOU DOWN.
YEAH, MAYBE THAT WAS IT!

NEVER !!
RAWR
がっ

SOME-WHERE OVER THE RAINBOW, ENGLAND AWAITS!
POETIC!

!?

SHINO, NO! YOU'LL WALK INTO TRAFFIC!
ふらっ
MEANDER

CAN YOU JUST NOT EVER READ THE MOOD?
PANIC
あわ
PANIC
あわ
I-I'M SORRY!
BUT, BUT, BUT THERE ARE NAKED PHOTOS OF ME IN THERE!
YEAH, BABY PICS!!

GLOOM
どよーん

SEE YOU TOMORROW!
BYE-BYE!

AFTER WE TALKED ABOUT ENGLAND, I'M JUST ACHING TO GO AGAIN...
SHINO? WHAT'S THE MATTER?
MMNGH...

YEAH, ENGLAND WOULD BE COOL.
IT WOULD BE NICE TO VISIT ALICE'S HOUSE ONE DAY.

GOOD IDEA!
I KNOW! LET'S BOTH SAVE UP TO TRAVEL!

SHE'S MOVING!?
HEH, MAYBE I'D JUST MOVE THERE WHILE I'M AT IT!
J.k.

IT FEELS SO FAR AWAY...
チャリーン!
KA-CLINK
"EVERY LITTLE BIT HELPS!
WE'LL AIM FOR TEN YEN EACH DAY!

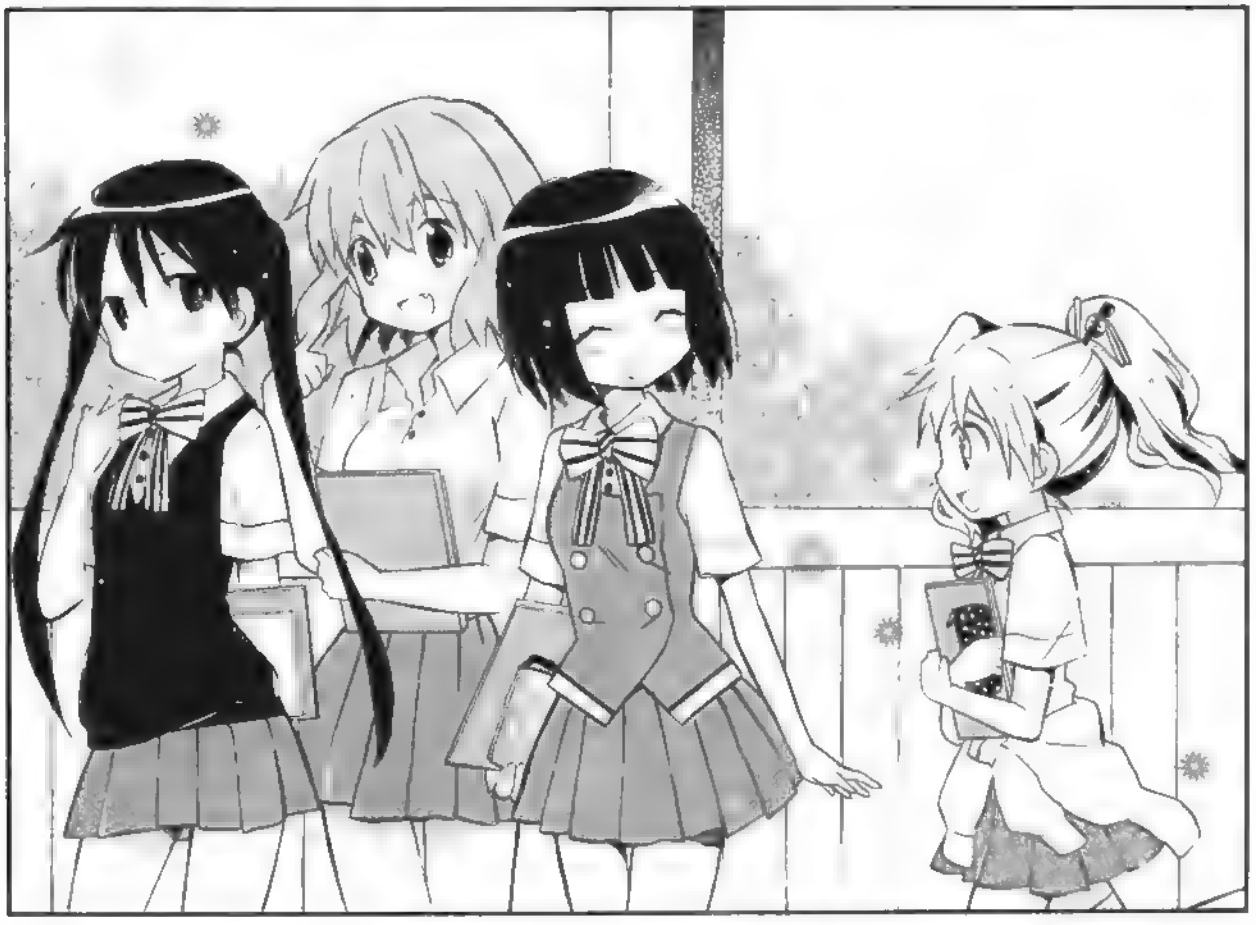
WHOA, NOW! IT WAS A JOKE!
ボロ ボロ SOB SOB
I'LL... WRITE YOU EVERY DAY!
ぐす SNIF

I SEE NOW! YOU'RE COOLING DOWN THE AIR.
OHH!
YOU KNOW HOW YOU BLOW ON SOUP AND OTHER HOT FOODS TO HELP COOL THEM DOWN?

FWOO!
FWOO!

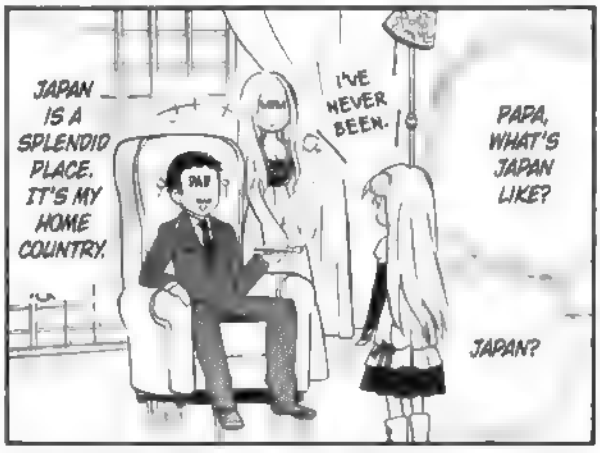
WHAT ARE YOU TWO DOING NOW...?
MORNING!
FWOO!
FWOO!

CHIRP
CHIRP
PHEW.
SHORT OF BREATH, ALICE?

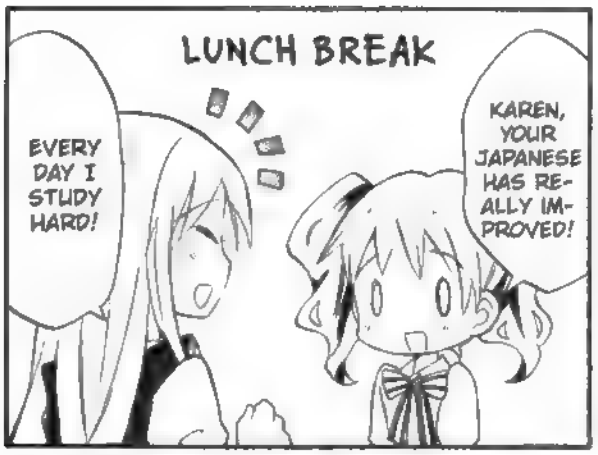


IT COULD BE THAT YOU'RE MORE AWARE OF THEM SINCE MEETING ALICE.
LATELY, I'VE BEEN SEEING A BUNCH OF FOREIGNERS AROUND.
I CAN'T HANDLE THE HEAT...
はぁはぁ FAN
はぁはぁ FAN
WHAAAT!? TELL ME EVERYTHING!
SINCE WE'RE ON THE SUBJECT.
I SAW ANOTHER BLOND GIRL AROUND HERE JUST THE OTHER DAY.
AHHH.
ALICE, THAT WAS JUST A LITTLE OFF.
AS THEY SAY, "CLEAR YOUR MIND OF MONDAY THOUGHTS, AND EVEN FIRE WILL FEEL COOL!"
UMM...
AND SHE WASN'T THAT TALL, I GUESS?
SHE HAD LONG BLOND HAIR AND GRAY EYES ... SHE WAS WEARING A HOODIE ...
OOPS!
IT'S, "CLEAR YOUR MIND OF MUNDANE THOUGHTS, AND EVEN FIRE WILL FEEL COOL."
ISN'T THAT HER!?
OH, HERE WE GO.
SHE LOOKED JUST LIKE THIS.
LET YOUR BRAIN COOL DOWN, ALICE!!
ぷしゅう
FIZZLE
UMM... CLEAR YOUR MIND... OF...

MY NAME KAREN KUJOU!
じー
GAZE
!
SHE'S WEARING OUR SCHOOL'S UNIFORM.
IS THAT THE GIRL FROM THE PHOTO? ALICE'S FRIEND?
I THINK SHE SAID SHE'S HALF-JAPANESE.
はぁ
BEAM
ALICE !!
KAREN, HOW DID YOU END UP IN JAPAN? AND THAT UNIFORM ...
がばっ
GLOM
ALICE! ALICE!
WH... KAREN!?
WHOOOSH! WHOOOSH!
AIRPLANE!
I DON'T MEAN WHAT YOU RODE HERE!!
ぎゅっ
HUG
WHO ARE YOU?
SHINO! YOU DON'T BELONG IN THERE!



※ KAREN'S FAMILY IS RICH.


LUNCH BREAK
EVERY DAY I STUDY HARD!
KAREN, YOUR JAPANESE HAS REALLY IMPROVED!

ALIIICE!
CLASS A
CLASS B
WE CAN GO VISIT HER DURING LUNCH BREAK.
TOO BAD KAREN'S IN THE CLASS NEXT DOOR AND NOT OURS.

YES!
BECAUSE AT HOME, PAPA SPEAK ENGLISH.
WERE YOU BROUGHT UP IN ENGLAND, KAREN?
...YOUR SPEECH IS A BIT BROKEN.
FOR SOMEONE HALF-JAPANESE ...

I—
I AM NOT!
HMM?
ALICE, YOU SEEM A LITTLE DOWN.

THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH BROKEN SPEECH! I THINK IT'S CUTE!
I WANT TO BECOME GOOD IN JAPANESE LIKE ALICE.

ALICE?

TEE-HEE
YIKES! THAT WAS SO FORCED!
I STILL HAVE LONG WAY TO GO. JAPANESE VERY HARD! ☆

WHAP
WHY DID YOU BRING WHOLE VEGETABLES TO SCHOOL !?
IS IT THE SUMMER HEAT? YOU CAN BEAT THE HEAT WITH SUMMER VEGETABLES!!

⬆ HER LUNCH

UMM ...
SHINO-BU.
YOUKO.
I'M AYA.

A LOT OF HALF-JAPANESE KIDS HAVE NAMES THAT SOUND NORMAL IN BOTH OF THEIR PARENTS' CULTURES, RIGHT?
LIKE RISA OR NAOMI.
MY PAPA NAME ME!

AYAYA?
THAT'S ONE EXTRA "YA." IT'S "AYA."

KANJI FOR KAREN MEAN "LOVELY," LIKE "A LOVELY FLOWER."
IT IS HARD LETTER.
OH, I SEE. THAT'S A PRETTY NAME.

AYAYA!
BEAM
AYAYA!

HE MUST HAVE NAMED YOU THAT SO YOU WOULD GROW UP... ...TO BE A LOVELY GIRL!
I'M SURE OF IT!
WHAT ABOUT MY NAME, SHINO?

AYAYA!
AYAYA!
JOINED IN
S... STOP IT...

ALICE MEANS "SMALL AND CUTE LIKE A SQUIRREL"!
WOW!
"AH, RISU" IS NOT HER NAME.
SHE ISN'T HALF-JAPANESE IN THE FIRST PLACE!

IS EVERY-THING OKAY, ALICE? YOU DON'T SEEM YOUR-SELF.
HUH!?
I DON'T? HOW SO?

IT'S WHAT ALL MY FRIENDS CALL ME.
JOLT
!!
YOU CAN CALL ME "SHINO"!

ALICE IS TOTALLY JEALOUS OF KAREN!
AREN'CHA?
!!
IS THAT TRUE?

OH, LIKE A SHINOBI?
ARE YOU NINJA? WALK UP WALLS?
I'M AF-RAID NOT ...
SULK
しゅん...

KAREN DOES HAPPEN TO BE AVERAGE HEIGHT ...
...AND SHE HAS MORE FOREIGN CHARM THAN ALICE...
(BECAUSE OF HER BROKEN SPEECH.)

AWW...
DON'T SAY THAT! SHINO'S INCREDIBLE! SHE CAN DO ANYTHING!
YOU CAN-NOT?

BUT ALICE, YOU HAVE PLENTY OF GOOD POINTS TOO!
BELIEVE IN YOURSELF!
CLENCH
YOU'RE NOT HELPING AT ALL ...
SHINO...

GO AHEAD, SHINO! RUN UP THE WALL!
THAT'S A TALL ORDER !!

OH!
OKAY! SEE YA!
MY HOUSE THIS WAY!
SEE YOU TOMOR-ROW.
AND SEE SHINO...
INNER VOICE
KAREN... I'M SORRY I LEFT ENGLAND WITHOUT TELLING YOU.
I JUST HAD TO STUDY IN JAPAN ...
MWAH!
I SEE YOU TOMOR-ROW!
EEEP!
THAT WHY I FOLLOW ALICE TO JAPAN.
I HAVE REGRET IN HEART. ABOUT PROMISE WE MAKE WHEN LITTLE ...
KAREN!!
WHOA!
FOR-EIGNER!
FOR-EIGNER ALERT!!
A PROM-ISE...?
YES, PROMISE.
OKAY!
OHHH!
GEEZ!
WHEN JAPANESE PEOPLE SAY GOOD-BYE, THEY WAVE AND SAY "SAYO-NARA"!
ALICE ...
PLACE
MUN...
WHO CARES ABOUT A PEN-CIL!?
I RETURN THIS PENCIL I BORROW LONG AGO!

FAVORITE FOUR-CHARACTER IDIOMS

OOPS!
IT'S NOT "MORMING," IT'S "MORNING."
WHAT? ALICE, YOU DIDN'T KNOW?

GOOD MORMING!
EVERYONE!

H-HUH!? REALLY!?
"MORMING" IS ACTUALLY THE CORRECT JAPANESE!
YOU'RE AN AWFUL JAPANESE PERSON!

KAREN!
HEYA, KAREN!
HI.

SHE MOVED HERE IN THE FIRST YEAR OF MIDDLE SCHOOL.
AYA-CHAN HAS SWITCHED SCHOOLS BEFORE TOO!

CLASS B
CLASS A
YEAH, IT'S TOUGH TRANSFERRING IN.
I WANT TO MAKE FRIEND IN MY CLASS, BUT IT IS NOT GOING WELL.

L-LET ME THINK... THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS...
PLEASE!
GIVE ME ADVICE TO MAKE FRIEND, PLEASE!

WHAT ABOUT ME, SHINO?
EVEN THOUGH SHE'S HALF-JAPANESE.
HUH?
...AND KAREN GIVES OFF AN EXTRA-INTENSE FOREIGNER VIBE.
IT'S ALREADY DIFFICULT ENOUGH TO TALK TO A FOREIGNER ...

...BEING ABLE TO READ THE AIR.

GROWL
TO MAKE AN ANIMAL ANALOGY, KAREN IS LIKE A LION IN A HERD OF DEER.

NOT THAT KIND OF AIR.
No!
I BRING ONE TOMORROW!
A WEATHER VANE DOES THAT!

SHINO, THAT'S NOT A GOOD ANALOGY!
I-I... HAVE TO RUN ...

I'M SORRY I'M NOT ANY HELP.
AFTER THAT, YOUKO-CHAN DRAGGED YOU AROUND, RIGHT?

MY NAME IS SHINOBU OOMIYA.
SHINO, FIRST YEAR OF MIDDLE SCHOOL
MAY I CALL YOU "AYA-CHAN"?

I SURE DID! SHE WAS PRAC-TICALLY GLUED TO ME UNTIL SHE GOT USED TO THINGS.
FIDGET おどおど
FIDGET

Y-YEAH. WHATEVER YOU LIKE.
STIFF ギクシャク
I CAN SHOW YOU AROUND SCHOOL! SHALL WE?

SHE WAS LIKE AN ABANDONED PUPPY!
きゅーん
TWINGE
CLENCH
きゅー

Y—
YOU DON'T HAVE TO BABY-SIT ME!
SENSEI ALREADY GAVE ME A MAP!
CLINT
ぎゅ!!!

STOP MAKING UP LIES!
LIAR!
BLUUUUSH
がおおお
THEY'RE VERY CLOSE.

U-UH, NOT THAT I DON'T APPRE-CIATE IT!
SQUEAK!
UHHH...
THAT OLD WOUND
URGH!
AYA-CHAN? ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

I MADE A BRILLIANT DISCOVERY THE OTHER DAY!
THEIR CONVERSATION (TRANSLATED INTO JAPANESE)
...BUT TAIYAKI DOESN'T HAVE SEA BREAM, OR "TAI," INSIDE IT!
TAKOYAKI HAS OCTOPUS, OR "TAKO," INSIDE IT...
FLASH
NICE.
WHOA!
THEY USE ENGLISH WHEN THEY SPEAK TO EACH OTHER!
WHAT!? ALICE, YOU'VE ALREADY HAD TAIYAKI!?
OH NO!
THAT'S COMMON SENSE.
I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT YOU MEAN! THEY'RE DAZZLING, LIKE CELEBRITIES!
THERE'S THIS, LIKE, UNIQUE AURA AROUND THEM.
TOO COOL.
ENGLISH, WOW...!
WHO KNOWS WHAT THEY COULD BE SAYING?
WOW! YOU'RE SUCH A JAPAN EXPERT!!
WHY?
M-ME TOO!
MAYBE I'LL ASK FOR THEIR AUTOGRAPHS!

ほわ COZY
ほわ COZY
SENSEI, WILL YOU HELP ME WITH THIS PROB-LEM?

JAPANESE UNIFORM VERY CUTE.

YOU SLEEP TOO MUCH...
I ACCI-DENTALLY SLEPT FOR TWELVE HOURS!
ほわ GENTLE
ほわ GENTLE

I MEAN GAKURAN UNIFORM! SO CUTE, LIKE BLACK CAT!
NO NO
OUR SCHOOL HAS BLAZERS INSTEAD.
ARE YOU INTERESTED IN SAILOR UNIFORMS, THEN?

ﾅﾃﾅﾃ
HRRRGS...

WHAT! I THINK BOTH SHOULD WEAR!
THOSE ARE ONLY FOR BOYS.

HRMM...
MAYBE IT HARD TO TALK TO ME BE-CAUSE OF MY MEAN EYES ...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, KAREN?

YOU LOOK PLENTY FREE AL-READY.
MORE FREEDOM! EACH PERSON TASTE IMPOR-TANT!

KAREN, WHY NOT JOIN A CLUB?
CLUB? ALICE IN CLUB?

SHINO IS GENTLE AND EASY TO TALK. IS NICE.
IT TAKES TIME TO BE ABLE TO APPROACH NEW PEOPLE.

WE'RE IN THE GO HOME CLUB ...
SNAP
THE SHINO CLUB!

BUT YOU HAVE A FANTASTIC SMILE, KAREN!
SMILES ARE FREE!
WHY, I BET YOU COULD MAKE A HUNDRED FRIENDS!
SHIMMER

HUH!? WHAT'S THAT!?
!?
CLUB ACTIVITIES INCLUDE CHATTING WITH SHINO AND EATING LUNCH WITH SHINO!

EVERYONE SO NICE. I LOVE YOU ALL.
BUT SHINO FEEL SPECIAL!
EH-HEH!

I CAN JOIN TOO?
WAAAH!
JUST SO YOU KNOW, I'M THE CLUB PRESIDENT !!
UHH... SO IT'S A FAN CLUB?

AWW, YOU'RE MAKING ME BLUSH!

LOUD ENOUGH TO HEAR IN THE CLASS NEXT DOOR

HMM.
I WISH I WAS A LITTLE MORE FORWARD.
MAYBE I COULD HAVE MADE MORE FRIENDS RIGHT AWAY, LIKE KAREN ...

WAAAH!
SEE YOU TOMORROW!
BYE BYE, KAREN-CHAN!

WH ...?
LIKE JUST NOW.
THE WAY YOU'RE ABLE TO THINK WITH A COOL HEAD AND RECOGNIZE YOUR FAULTS IS YOUR STRONG POINT.

YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN A FORWARD PERSON.
SO GLAD!
THEY TALKED TO ME!

BLUSH
か

なでなで
SQUOOSH
THANK YOU! I LOVE YOU TOO!
BUT THAT'S YOUR STRONG SUIT. I LOVE THAT ABOUT YOU.

ばんっ
BAM
SH-SH-SHUT UP!!
BESIDES, YOU HAVE SOME PRETTY FORWARD REACTIONS ...
OUCH!

NOOo!
抱きっ
HUG
THAT IS TOO FORWARD !!
OF COURSE I LOVE, LOVE, LOVE SHINO TOO! ♡

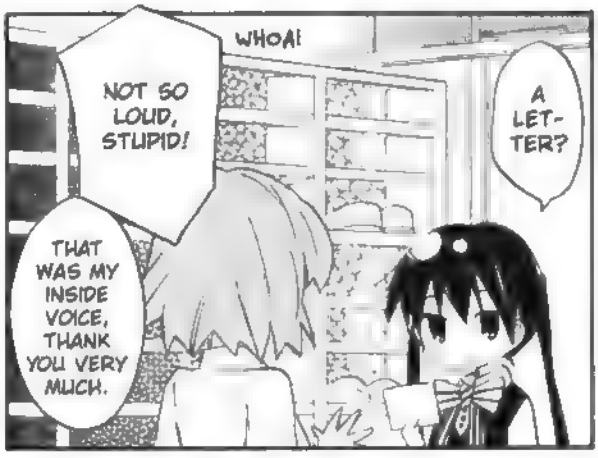
OH MAN, AYA, YOU HAVE GOT TO HEAR THIS!!
YOU'RE OVER-REACTING
MY HEART IS BEING TOOORN APART!
B-B-B-BUT WHAT IF SHE TAKES A TURN FOR THE WORSE WHILE I'M AT SCHOOL!? JUST THINKING OF IT...
STOMP
STOMP
SHINO'S AT HOME WITH A COLD TODAY?
SHE DID SEEM UNDER THE WEATHER YESTERDAY.
YAHOOO!
DO YOU HAVE A FEVER TOO?
SOMETHING GOING AROUND?
SPRING HAS SPRUNG !!
SHE'LL GET BETTER WITH REST.
KOFF
KOFF
WHEEZE WHEEZE
I WANTED TO STAY HOME TO NURSE HER BACK TO HEALTH, BUT SHE SAID TO GO TO SCHOOL.

WOW~!
Love Letter?
POP
THAT ENGLISH! SO SMOOTH!

TAKE A LOOK AT THIS BABY!
DUN

YOU'RE MAKIN' ME BLUSH.
EH HEH!
"MOTE-MOTE"?
WOW, YOUKO! LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE "MOTE-MOTE"*!

*POPULAR


WHOA!
NOT SO LOUD, STUPID!
A LET-TER?
THAT WAS MY INSIDE VOICE, THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

WHAT DOES "MOTEMOTE" MEAN?
DOES IT HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH "MOCHIMOCHI"— SPRINGY LIKE RICE CAKES? OH! YES, THAT MUST BE IT!
UMM...

I FOUND THAT ...
...IN MY SHOE CUBBY!

IS THAT SUP-POSED TO BE A COMPLI-MENT !?
AMAZING, YOUKO! YOU SO MOCHI-MOCHI!

NOT SO LOUD, STUPID!!
BLUUUSH
か！
DOES THAT MEAN IT'S A LOVE ...?
OH, SHUT UP!

AYA, NO!
?!
RIP
ANYWAY, WE'LL KNOW FOR SURE WHEN WE OPEN IT.

BUT IT WAS IN MY SHOE CUBBY!
WHUUUT?
IT MIGHT NOT BE A LOVE LETTER.
YOU HAVEN'T OPENED IT YET, RIGHT? YOU DON'T KNOW FOR SURE YET.

YOU CAN'T GO AND READ IT!
AH...
THAT LETTER IS MEANT FOR YOUKO'S EYES ONLY!

ACK!
P-PLENTY!
LIKE?
WHAT OTHER KINDS OF LETTERS DO PEOPLE EVEN WRITE?

'KAY. I'LL READ IT IN PRIVATE LATER.
I GUESS SHE'S RIGHT. SORRY ABOUT THAT.

CHAIN LETTERS.
L-LIKE...
I KNOW.

HRRNG
GOTTA KNOW.
GOTTA KNOW.
GOTTA KNO
...YOU GONNA LET GO?

RATTLE
RATTLE
IT WAS JUST AN EXAMPLE!
BURN IT! BURN IT RIGHT NOW!!
GYAAAH!

THAT WOULD BE IT'S OWN KIND OF...
FOR REAL?
LOVE LETTER COULD BE FROM GIRL!
YOUKO SEEM LIKE SHE WOULD BE MORE POPULAR WITH GIRL THAN BOY.
SNOOP

GIRLS' RESTROOM

AH
CLATTER

I'VE GOTTA TRY TO BE A LITTLE MORE LADY-LIKE.
HRRRM

TH-THANK YOU.
HERE YOU ARE.
YOU DROPPED YOUR PENCIL.

STARE
HMPH.
LADYLIKE? THAT IS SO NOT YOU.

LET'S BOTH STUDY HARD, SHALL WE?
U FU FU!
OH, IT WAS NO TROUBLE AT ALL.

H-HUH?
YOU'RE ALL LADYLIKE AND FEMI-NINE...

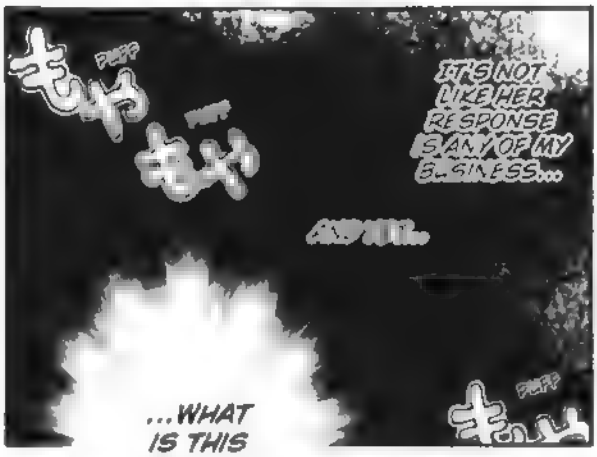
WHAA—?
I THINK I WAS PRETTY SPOT ON.
CUT IT OUT!!
I DON'T TALK LIKE THAT!

WHAT?
WHAT IS THAT SUP-POSED TO...?
YEAH! THAT'S IT!
I'LL TRY ACTING LIKE YOU!

WHEW!
SCHOOL IS FINALLY OUT!
キーン コーン
BING BONG
LET'S HURRY AND GO!
I'M WORRIED ABOUT SHINO!
JOLT

そわそわ
SQUIRM
IT'S BEEN HOURS NOW AND YOUKO STILL HASN'T MADE ANY MOVE TO OPEN THAT LETTER.
WHEN IS SHE PLANNING ON READING IT...?

HUH!? BUT WHAT ABOUT THE LETTER!?
THE LETTER? OH YEAH. I FORGOT ABOUT THAT.
YOU FOR-GOT!?


もや
PUFF
IT'S NOT LIKE HER RESPONSE SAD MY BUSINESS...
...WHAT IS THIS FEELING?

I GUESS THERE MIGHT BE SOMETHING IMPORTANT WRITTEN IN IT. I SHOULD READ THIS THING, HUH?
YOUKO ...
AH...

FOR THIS NEXT PART... ... KOMICHI-SAN...?
HNNG ...
ENVELOPE

C... CON-GRATU-LATIONS!
じわ
SOB
UH...
FOR WHAT?

BWAAAH!
I DON'T UNDER-STAND! I DON'T UNDER-STAND ANY-THING!
WHAT'S WRONG, KOMICHI-SAN!?

CRINKLE
ペラっ
BADUM
BADUM
'KAY, I'M GONNA READ IT NOW!

WH—
I THINK YOU'VE GOT THE WRONG IDEA.
WHY!?
I MEAN, WHILE I'M FLATTERED, I PLAN ON TURNING THEM DOWN. ALWAYS DID.

"HELLO. THIS IS SHINOBU.
"HOW IS LIFE IN ENGLAND? WE'VE HAD CLEAR WEATHER HERE IN JAPAN.

!
ニヤリ
GRIN
'COS NO MATTER WHO WROTE THIS, I LOVE YOU MORE!

"LITTLE ALICE IS IN GOOD SPIRITS.
"THEN, UNTIL NEXT TIME."

BLUUUSH
カァァ…
…J—

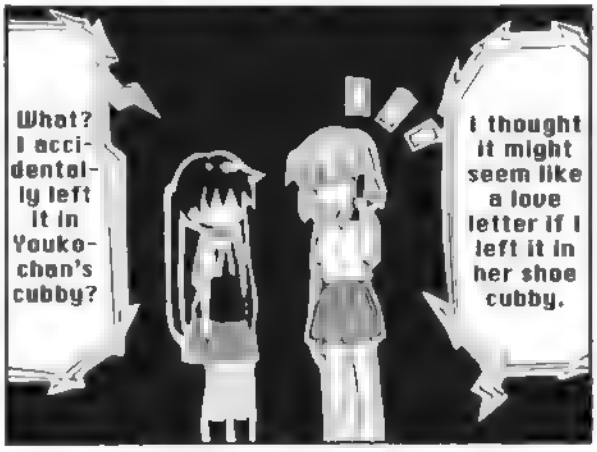
WHAT IN THE WORLD !?
… "PLEASE TRANS-LATE THIS INTO ENGLISH FOR ME."

ABOUT HOW GREAT FRIENDS ARE.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
JUST OPEN IT AL-READY!
HMPH!

WELL, MAYBE IT'S BETTER THIS WAY.
CAN'T BELIEVE I SPENT THE WHOLE DAY WORRYING ABOUT A PRANK PULLED BY SHINO...

...SO I WROTE DOWN WHAT I WANTED TO SAY DOWN ON PAPER FOR ALICE TO TRANSLATE.
I'M GOING TO MAKE AN INTERNATIONAL CALL TO ALICE'S MOTHER ...

SNAP
カチッ
GIGGLE
IF YOU THINK ABOUT IT, YOU'D NEVER GET A REAL LOVE LETTER ANYWAY!

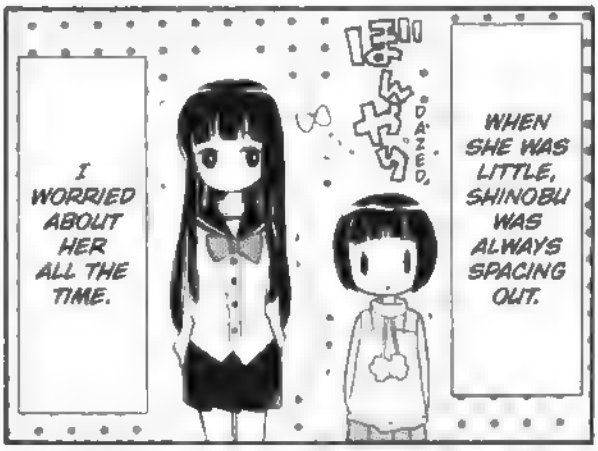

What? I accidentally left it in Youko-chan's cubby?
I thought it might seem like a love letter if I left it in her shoe cubby.

DID IT GET YOUR HEART POUNDING, YOUKO-CHAN!?
U FU FU!
OH, DEAR ME!

I WONDER WHY?
AYAYA IN VERY GOOD MOOD!

EXHAUSTED...
Huh!?
WHAT A LET-DOWN ...

PLEASE PUT THIS ONE ON NEXT!
はお
HFF!
はお
HFF!
AND THEN THIS DRESS ...


WHEN SHE WAS LITTLE, SHINOBU WAS ALWAYS SPACING OUT.
DAZED.
I WORRIED ABOUT HER ALL THE TIME.

I WORRY FOR MY SISTER'S FUTURE.
WHAT ON EARTH...?

MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE SHE FOUND SOME-THING TO BE PASSION-ATE ABOUT...
...BUT I THINK SHE'S BECOME MORE GROUND-ED THAN BACK THEN.

THANKS FOR HAVING US!
COME ON IN. WHAT ARE YOU ALL UP TO TODAY?
SUNDAY
YOU'VE NEVER MET ISA-NEE, HAVE YOU?
I'M GETTING NERVOUS.
OH MY.
I BROUGHT A LITTLE SOMETHING FOR THE FAMILY TO SHARE.
SO POLITE.
WE'RE HAVING A STUDY PARTY IN SHINOBU'S ROOM.
SWEETS
YES!!
EH, I DON'T READ FASHION MAGS AND ALL THAT.
I'VE SEEN HER IN MAGAZINES PLENTY OF TIMES...
I BECAME AN INSTANT FAN WHEN I SAW YOUR WORK IN MAGAZINES.
MY NAME'S KAREN KUJOU!
...MANY GIRL ADMIRE ISAM!!
FROM HIGH SCHOOL GIRL TO MEGA-POPULAR FASHION MODEL...
FLUENT JAPANESE ...!?
FIDGET FIDGET もじもじ
MAY I ASK FOR YOUR AUTOGRAPH, IF YOU'D BE SO KIND?
HOW!?
YOU HAVEN'T BEEN IN JAPAN LONG, RIGHT?
I CANNOT WAIT!
HOW MANY AUTOGRAPH IS OK TO GET!?

じーっ
STARE
YOU SEEM LIKE YOU'D LOOK GREAT IN TRADITIONAL JAPANESE CLOTHES.
REALLY !?
NO ONE'S TOLD ME THAT BEFORE !

CAN YOU HELP ME WITH THIS PART, ONEE-CHAN?
SURE. BUT I DON'T WORK FOR FREE!

DOES THAT MEAN THIS OUTFIT LOOKS FUNNY ON ME?
かぁ
BLUSH
OH, NOT AT ALL. IT LOOKS TO ME LIKE YOU CHOOSE OUTFITS THAT SUIT YOU.

YOU WANT MONEY !?
GIVE ME ONE OF YOUR TREA-SURES OR SOME-THING.
EHHH!

YES, IT REALLY IS BEST TO WEAR OUTFITS THAT SUIT YOU...
GLANCE

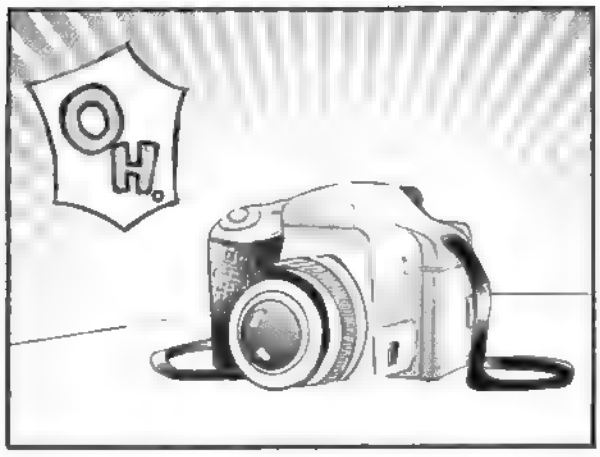
IF I MUST, I'LL GIVE YOU A PIECE FROM MY COLLEC-TION...
MY VENETIAN MASK!!
BAM
I DON'T WANT THAT JUNK.

EH HEH!
SHE'S BLUSH-ING!?
DOES IT SUIT ME THAT WELL?

ガーン
SHOCK
Y-YOU CALLED MY PRIZED POS-SES-SION "JUNK" !?
THEY'RE SO CLOSE.
JUNK!
YOU SURE ABOUT THAT ?

ONLY CHILD

I DON'T MIND POSING FOR THE CAMERA ...
...BUT I ACTUALLY PREFER BEING BEHIND IT.


OH.

WHO SHALL BE MY SUB-JECT ...
AYA-CHAN! GIVE ME A POSE!
YEEEEK!
M-ME!?

WHAT'CHA DOIN', KAREN-CHAN?
THIS IS MY ROOM.
OOOH!
A COOL CAM-ERA!

UH...
UM ...
PANIC
SMILE FOR ME!

I MEAN, I DON'T REALLY CARE.
QUIVER
QUIVER
I-I AM SORRY FOR MY RUDE-NESS...!
RRING RRING

HUH?
SNAP
ZOOM

IT'S A CALL FROM MY FRIEND.
BIP
NOT POLICE... ANYTHING BUT POLICE!!

AYA-CHAN WAS KIND ENOUGH TO BRING A HOMEMADE LUNCH FOR US!
WOW, LOOK AT THAT!!
GURGLE
IT'S JUST ABOUT LUNCH-TIME...
YOU MADE ALL THIS YOUR-SELF? WHAT A GOOD COOK.
O-OH...
DID YOUR STOMACH JUST GROWL?
IT WASN'T MINE. IT WAS YOURS!
YOU'LL MAKE A GREAT WIFE SOMEDAY!
I'M NOT...
WHAAA —? THAT WASN'T ME.
TH—
THEN IT WAS ALICE! WASN'T IT!?
HUH!?
SHE SAYS, WITH A HUGE SMILE !!
S—
STOP JOKING AROUND, DUMMY!
BEEEAM
I'M SORRY! I LIED! IT WAS ME ALL ALONG !!
WAH!
SNIFFLE
ほろ…
I IT WASN'T ME...

THEN LET'S GO TO THE NEIGH-BORHOOD PARK.
SURE THING!
WILL YOU TAKE PHOTO OF ME, LIKE MODEL?

ぱく
NOM
I'LL JUST HELP MYSELF, THEN!

WOW, REALLY ?
THIS TAKES ME BACK! ONEE-CHAN AND I PLAYED HERE ALL THE TIME WHEN WE WERE YOUNGER.

HUH?
IT DOESN'T HAVE ANY TASTE! THE SEASONING IS TOO LIGHT!!
IT LOOKS PERFECT, BUT THE TASTE...

HEY, THIS IS GOO—
SMILE
SMILE
BUT SHE LOOKS SO HAPPY...I CAN'T SAY ANYTHING THAT WOULD HURT HER FEEL-INGS.

WHERE DID THAT COME FROM?
RUFFLE RUFFLE
しみじみ
SHINOBU... YOU'VE GOTTEN SO BIG...

BLUNT
ずばっ
WH-WHAT?
THIS IS BLAND.
YOU GUYS! HAVE A HEART!

ISA-NEE, GET IN SOME PICS WITH US!
SURE. SHINOBU, CAN YOU TAKE THE CAMERA?

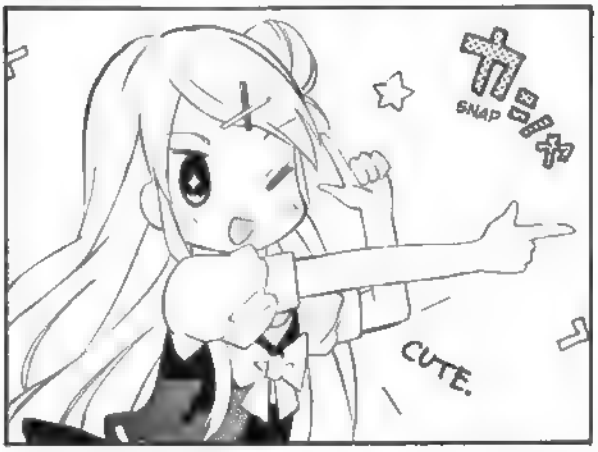
OKAY, ARE YOU READY?
YES!
I PRAC-TICE IN FRONT OF MIRROR EVERY DAY. TIME TO SEE FRUITS OF MY HARD WORK!

ACK!
OUR FACES MIGHT LOOK BIG AND WEIRD NEXT TO A MODEL!
MAYBE WE SHOULD STAND BACK A LITTLE.

SNAP
COOL.

ARE YOU READY FOR ME TO TAKE THE PHOTO?

BENCH


SNAP
CUTE.

HELLO?
FAR AWAY
OKAY!

OH NO!!
TRY TO BE MORE NATU-RAL.

THAT'S THE ENGLISH GIRL DOING A HOMESTAY AT YOUR PLACE?

I'LL GIVE SHINOBU THE PHOTOS WHEN THEY'RE READY.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR TODAY.

YOU SAID SHE CAN SPEAK JAPANESE, BUT HOW'S LIVING TOGETHER? USED TO IT YET?
MM-HM.

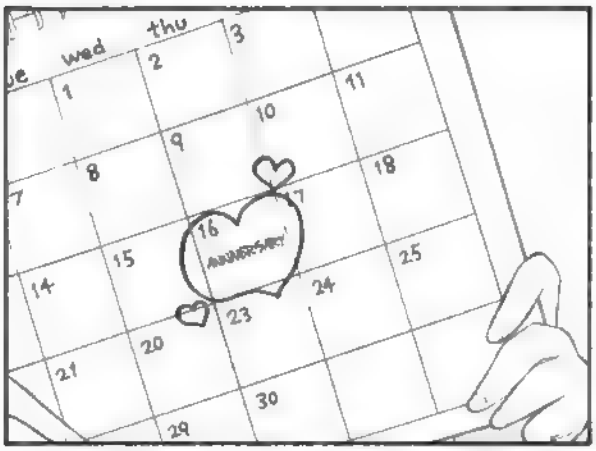
MAYBE THEY'LL CATCH HIS EYE...
IF IT'S NOT A BOTHER, PERHAPS YOU COULD SHOW THEM TO THE PHOTOGRAPHER YOU MODEL FOR...?

Hmm...

ISAMI !!
HMMM. MAYBE!

YOU'VE GOT SUCH A SISTER COMPLEX.
IT'S LIKE I HAVE TWO LITTLE SISTERS NOW. THEY'RE SO CUTE.

SMILE
PLEASE GIVE HIM MY BEST REGARDS.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thu
1
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ANNIVERSARY
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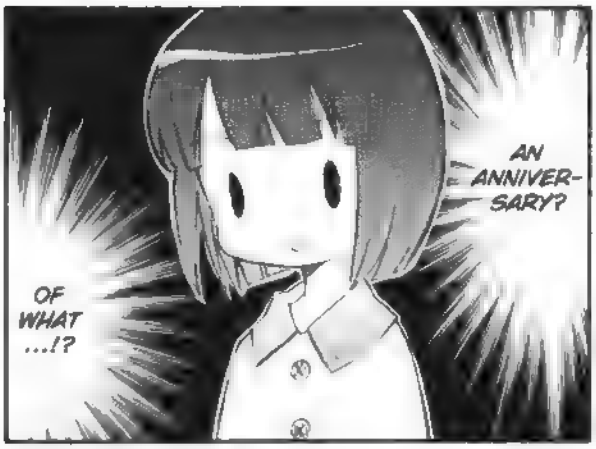
TOMORROW?
GRIN
GRIN
HEY, SHINO! KNOW WHAT DAY TOMORROW IS?


AN ANNIVER-SARY?
OF WHAT ...!?

UMM ...
IT'S NOT A HOLIDAY. PERHAPS IT'S SOME-ONE'S BIRTHDAY? NO...

POUT
SHE'S UPSET WITH ME FOR FORGETTING.
NO, I—
ACK!
SULK
YOU DON'T REMEMBER...?
I HAVE TO REMEMBER BEFORE WE GO TO SLEEP...
OHH...I HAVE TO REMEMBER...
ERRM... WHAT WAS IT... UM... YES!
I REMEMBER! YES, IT'S A VERY SPECIAL DAY TO YOU!
LISTEN, SHINO!
TOMORROW IS...
.....
.....
THE FIRST TIME YOU WENT TO THE BEACH!
NO.
THE FIRST DAY YOU SPOKE!
NO!
SNOOORE
FORGET IT!!
UHHH, UMM...
Y... YOUR... YOUR FIRST STEP...

HEY THERE, BOSS! ONE RAMEN!
BADUM
BADUM
COMIN' RIGHT UP!

FU FU!
YESTERDAY, I CLIMB HIGHER ON LADDER TO ADULTHOOD!

AND MAKE IT...
..."HOT"!!

HUH. CONGRATS.
SHOW INTEREST! TAKE BAIT!!

SLURP

I WENT TO RAMEN RESTAURANT ALL ALONE!
MAYBE THIS SOUND ORDINARY TO TWO JAPANESE PEOPLE, BUT FOR ME, IT WAS BIG ADVENTURE.

IN A WAY, THAT'S AMAZING!
SHE KNOWS NO FEAR!!

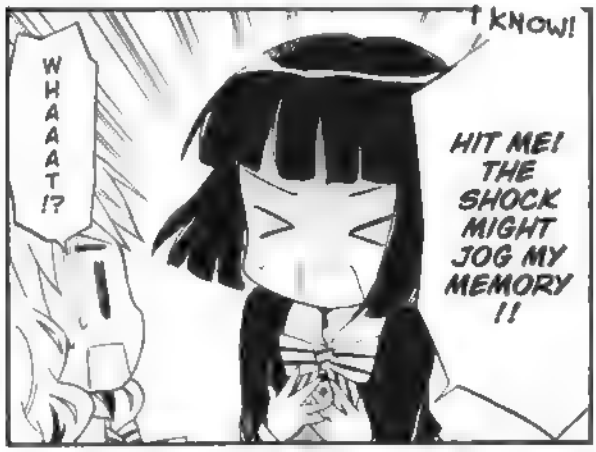
YOU WENT TO A RAMEN RESTAURANT ALONE!? YOU'RE SO GROWN UP!
I'M ONLY BRAVE ENOUGH TO GO TO FAST FOOD JOINTS!!

ANNIVERSARY?
ALICE HAS BEEN CROSS SINCE YESTERDAY BECAUSE I FORGOT ABOUT AN ANNIVERSARY.

POUT
GOOD MORNING!

AH...
I-IT'S OKAY! I'M SORRY TOO!
KNEEL
ALICE, I GIVE UP! I'M SO SORRY! I'M A HOPELESS FOOL!

WHAT'S THE MATTER, ALICE? YOU'RE MAKING AN OCTOPUS FACE.


I KNOW!
WHAAAAT!?
HIT ME! THE SHOCK MIGHT JOG MY MEMORY!!

AH! YOU'RE RIGHT. I'M SORRY.
SHE'S MAD.
"OCTOPUS"? WAY TO BE RUDE!

MURMUR
MURMUR
PLEASE GO AHEAD! DON'T HOLD BACK!!

THAT'S NOT ANY BETTER!
YOU'RE MAKING A SQUID FACE!

BLUSH
BLUSH
I'M EMBARRASSED, BUT TICKLED PINK!
TO THINK IT WAS MY OWN DAY!

...IS THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE DAY YOU CAME TO MY HOUSE, SHINO!
TODAY...

WHY NOT MAKE THAT RAMEN STORY YOU TOLD US YESTERDAY A THING?
LUCKYYY! I WANT MY OWN DAY TOO!
UM! SO...

UH-HUH! WE EVEN HAVE A PARTY!
YOU MADE IT AN ANNIVERSARY !?

UH, THAT'S MORE THAN A BIT MISLEADING ...
THAT GOOD IDEA!
"KAREN BECAME A WOMAN DAY"!
WE'LL CALL IT—
UM.
I...

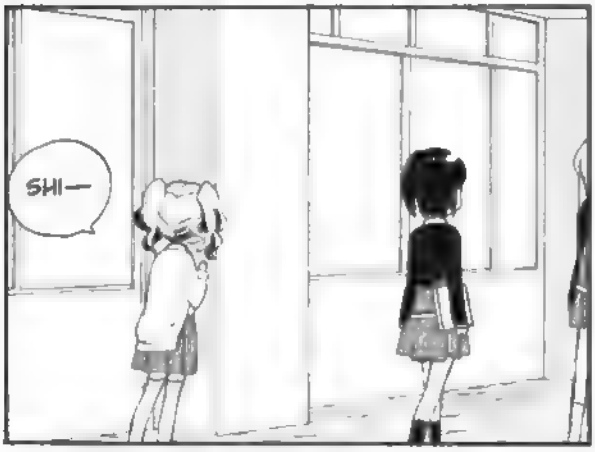
MY FAMILY CALLS IT "SHINO DAY"!
OH, SHINO! THAT WAS WHEN SHE—
WE MAKE A BIG MEAL, AND WE TALK ABOUT ALL OUR MEMORIES OF YOU OVER DINNER.

CLENCH
I HOPE I CAN GIVE THIS TO HER TODAY...

... WON'T THEY RUN OUT OF THINGS TO TALK ABOUT?
GOODNESS!
IF THEY CELEBRATE IT EVERY YEAR...

SHI—

HOW LONG I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR THIS DAY...


SHI—

YES, EVERY YEAR AROUND NOW. THERE'S SOME-THING THAT CAN'T BE DONE IN THE SUMMER.
OH? WAS THERE SOMETHING SPECIAL ABOUT TODAY?

SHI...

FLAP

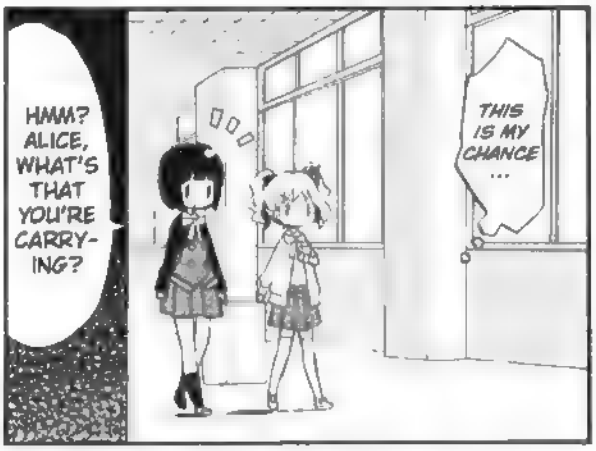
SCARY!
SHIVER
I'VE BEEN HEAR-ING A GHOSTLY VOICE HAUNT-ING ME ALL DAY LONG...

KARA-SUMA-SENSEI... THAT'S KIND OF SAD.
HAAAH.
THIS FITS SO PERFECTLY... IT'S ALWAYS A RELIEF!

A PRES-ENT?
FOR ME...?

ALICE, WILL YOU HELP ME TAKE THE TRASH OUT?
!
おーっ
I'M TAKING TOO LONG! SCHOOL'S ALREADY OVER!!

I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO GIVE YOU SOME-THING IN RETURN.
YOU BROUGHT ME HAIRPINS AS A GIFT FROM JAPAN, REMEM-BER?


HMM? ALICE, WHAT'S THAT YOU'RE CARRY-ING?
THIS IS MY CHANCE ...

SHE'S AN ANGEL!
パァ
BEEEEAM
I REALLY HOPE YOU'LL LIKE IT...
TWINGE
キュン♪

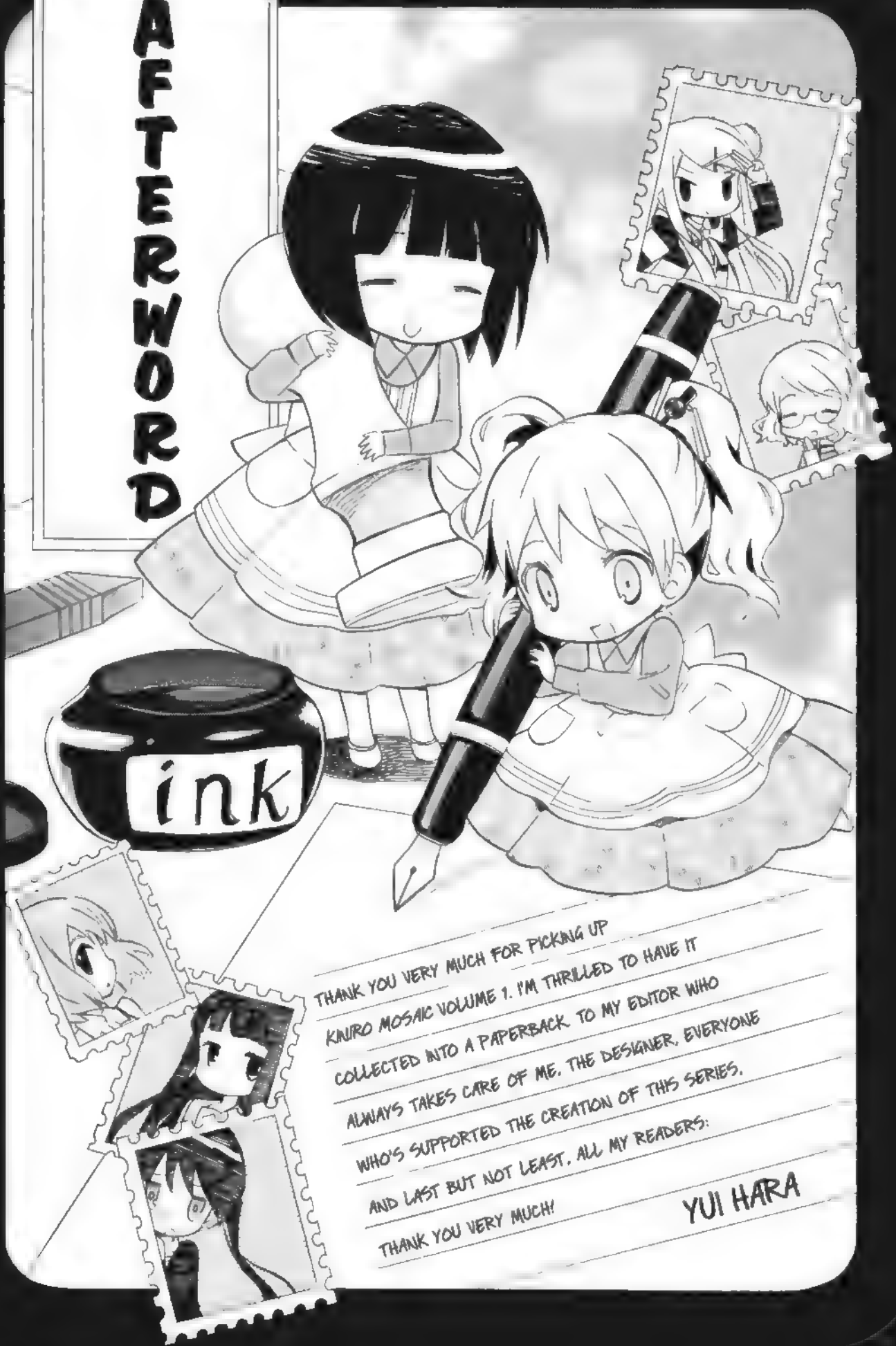
MORE TRASH?
TRASH BELONGS IN THE TRASH BIN!

SHINO! COME BACK TO EARTH!
AHH!
AN ANGEL...A GOLDEN-HAIRED ANGEL!!

DID I SAY SOME-THING BAD AGAIN!?
TREMBLE
TREMBLE
AHH!

WE'RE BACK!
!!?
TOOK YA LONG ENOU —
URK!
WAAAH!
WHAT A CUTE RIBBON!
YOUR HAIR!
ARE YOU SETTING UP A PUNCH-LINE!?
YOU WEAR MY GIFT EVERY DAY...
...SO I SHOULD TURN YOURS INTO PART OF MY DAILY WARD-ROBE TOO!
SMILE
SMILE
HOW DO I LOOK?
HAHAHA!
TOPKNOT!
MAY I KEEP THIS RIBBON... FOR ADMIRING ...?
BUT WHY!? IT'S SOOO CUTE!!
CUTE!
IT'S PERFECT ON YOU!!

AFTERWORD



THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR PICKING UP KIWRO MOSAIC VOLUME 1. I'M THRILLED TO HAVE IT COLLECTED INTO A PAPERBACK. TO MY EDITOR WHO ALWAYS TAKES CARE OF ME, THE DESIGNER, EVERYONE WHO'S SUPPORTED THE CREATION OF THIS SERIES, AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST, ALL MY READERS: THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

YUI HARA

EXCUSE ME. HAVE YOU SEEN A WHITE RABBIT?
UM... WHO ARE YOU?
WHY, I'M ALICE, OF COURSE! JUST LOOK AT ME! (TEE-HEE!)
SHINOBU IN WONDERLAND

ALICE, YOUR BLOND HAIR IS SO VERY BEAUTIFUL!
THANKS!

PUNS SO DIFFICULT. WILL YOU TEACH ME?
HMM...
OKAY, I'VE GOT ONE.

OF COURSE, MINE IS EVEN MORE BEAUTI-FUL...

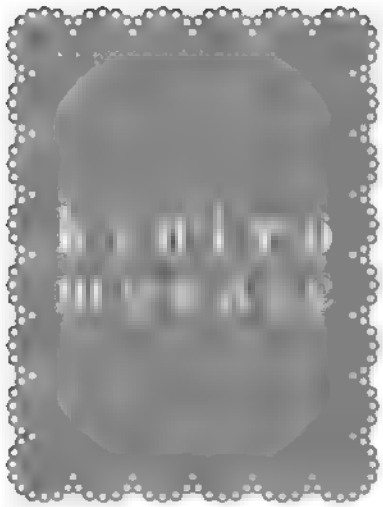
KAREN BEGAN CARIN' FOR A LOVELY FLOWER ...
...AND HER CLARIN' GAVE IT POWER!
IT'S LIKE THAT.

EEEEK!!
がばあっ BOLT
A NIGHT-MARE!
WHAT'S WRONG, ALICE? DIDJA HAVE A BAD DREAM?

EH?

HERE. SHINO'S FACE WILL CALM YOU DOWN!
がタがタ QUIVER QUIVER

WHAT THAT MEAN?
ONCE MORE, PLEASE!
PUNS AREN'T ABOUT MEAN-ING...!
かおお BLUSH



Translation Notes

GENERAL:
Kiniro Mosaic means "Gold-Colored Mosaic" in Japanese.

PAGE 3
The Japanese school year starts in spring, when the **cherry blossoms** are blooming. Thus, the cherry blossom is a common image in manga/anime that are set at schools.

Dorayaki is a pancake snack with red-bean paste inside. Gift-giving is a pervasive custom in Japan (when you move into a new home, when you come back from a trip, when you visit someone, etc.) and considered proper manners.

PAGE 4
Sitting in formal Japanese style is called *seiza*, which literally means "the correct way to sit." Though it is often viewed as a very traditional Japanese way of sitting, it actually came about after the Meiji Restoration in 1868, when Japan began to modernize and model itself more after European nations. It is notoriously uncomfortable for foreigners unaccustomed to this style of sitting, so the fact that Alice appears to be so practiced hints at her love of Japanese culture.

The concept of the **ideal Japanese woman**, known as *yamato nadeshiko*, gained prominence during World War II. Women were to be demure on the outside, strong on the inside, and fiercely loyal to their husbands and country. In time, the term has come to mean a "classic beauty."

PAGE 11
In Japanese schools, students change into **indoor slippers** and leave their outside shoes in shoe cubbies.

The **kokeshi doll** is a traditional wooden doll with no arms or legs.

PAGE 12
Writing Japanese with English letters is also called writing in *romaji* ("Roman letters").

PAGE 13
Arigatou means "thank you." Alice's pronunciation, *arigato*, is slightly off to show that she's still learning Japanese.

Konnichiwa means "hello/good afternoon."

PAGE 15
Since addressing others by their last name is common in Japan, **calling someone by their first name alone or by a nickname** indicates a close relationship. By saying she'll call Shinobu "Shino," Alice is bragging that she's closer to Shinobu than Karasuma-sensei is, to show that she's pulled ahead in their "rivalry."

When Aya says, **"Looks more like a duck to me,"** she mentions in Japanese a particular species of duck known as the spot-billed duck, or *karugamo*. The Eastern spot-billed duck is native to Asia.

PAGE 17

Japanese high school lasts three years, and students typically attend from the ages of sixteen to eighteen.

PAGE 19

Teachers in Japan check off incorrect answers and circle correct ones.

Aya's mispronunciation of "even" as **eben** is a mispronunciation of *shinjirarenai*, or "I can't believe it" in Japanese. Aya accidentally combines a negative conjugation (*shinjirarenai*) with a positive one (*shinjiraremasu*) to form *shinjirarenasu*. Afterward, Shino keeps ending her sentences with *-nasu*.

PAGE 20

Moé has become a common term in anime and manga to describe cute characters who inspire feelings of affection or protectiveness or to describe the emotion one feels toward such characters. Personal interpretations of what it means to be *moé* can differ. Shinobu has written the correct kanji for it, but her explanation is indeed bunk. There are multiple theories about the etymology of *moé* (including Youko's explanation). The kanji for it means "to bud/sprout."

In the Japanese version, ***mougheh*** is written as *mohe*. In older forms of the Japanese language, certain instances resulted in the *h* sound being silent or pronounced as *w*. Relics of this can still be found in modern Japanese.

PAGE 21

Japanese-style fried eggs, or *tamagoyaki*, are several thin layers of cooked egg rolled up together as they're fried. They are a common breakfast food or a side in lunches.

***Shiritori* word chain** is a game in which players must come up with a word that begins with the last syllable of the previous word in the chain. If they can't think of one in time, or think up a word ending in the syllable *n* (which never starts a word in Japanese), they lose the game. The original Japanese is *tamagoyaki* (fried eggs), *kitakitsune* (red fox), *neriwasabi* (wasabi paste), *biriyaado* (billiards). To keep the game going, Alice would need to think of a word starting with *do*.

PAGE 26

Gothic Lolita is a type of fashion inspired by Victorian England that emerged in the 1980s and is a subset of Lolita fashion—other examples include Prince Lolita (which emphasizes masculinity) and Sweet Lolita (which projects an image of innocence). Though it is sometimes assumed that Lolita fashion is meant to attract potential partners, those who participate in the style generally see it as a form of defiance or rebellion against how women are viewed and objectified in Japan.

PAGE 31

The Japanese word for "blond," *kinpatsu*, literally means **gold hair**.

PAGE 32

Kintarou candy has existed since the Edo period. Kintarou ("Golden Boy"—appropriate for *Kiniro Mosaic*) is a Japanese folk hero.

PAGE 35

Alice says, **"There are a lot of foreigners in Japan."** The joke here is that the high school girl is not a foreigner but rather a Japanese girl who has dyed her hair blond. This style is known as *gyaru*, from the English word "gal," and typically involves heavy use of makeup and accessories, and sometimes tanned skin.

PAGE 36

Japanese households and businesses **splash water** outside of entrances in the summer to help ease the heat.

Ironically, Alice is eating a **Japanese-style breakfast** of *natto*, rice, miso soup, and *tamagoyaki*, while Shinobu has a more "modern" **Western-style breakfast** of toast. *Natto* is a sticky fermented soybean snack with a powerful smell, taste, and texture, and it's often depicted as a love-it-or-hate-it food.

***Oyama* dolls** are typically dressed in traditional Japanese outfits and are considerably more expensive than the *kokeshi* dolls to which Alice compares Shino.

PAGE 40

Performing at the **Budokan** is something of a trope—booking this arena means you've made it into the big leagues as a music performer.

PAGE 46

Radio exercises are morning calisthenics that are broadcast to the public to encourage good health. Beginning in 1928 in Japan, the practice was originally a way to keep soldiers in shape. Eventually, they changed to a more benign version, and later moved to television (though they're still called "radio exercises").

PAGE 49

Fighto/faito is something said to cheer people on.

PAGE 50

In Japanese, the word Alice jots down for **cray cray** is *yabasu*, which is a colloquial way of saying the word *yabai* ("awful" or "dangerous").

PAGE 52

In the Japanese manga, the phrases used for **old soul** are *wakasa ga nai* ("I don't have any youthfulness") and *wakasa ga tarinai* ("I don't have enough youthfulness").

PAGE 53

Bonsai, the art of growing and maintaining small potted trees, literally means "planted in a container." With records dating as far back as 700 AD in China, it eventually made its way to Japan. Today, bonsai is considered an old person's hobby, which is why the present is such a downer for Shino.

Tanjoubi omedetou literally means "happy birthday." Alice has simply swapped out the English of the "Happy Birthday" song for Japanese.

PAGE 55

For **hunker down**, Shino uses *dokkoisho* in the Japanese version, a typical old-person saying uttered while sitting down. This lends further credence to the idea that, on the inside, Shino is older than sixteen.

In the Japanese manga, the term used for **glamour model** is "gravure idol," which refers to female models in Japan who pose for provocative photos, DVDs, and more. Taking this route is frequently a stepping stone for celebrity hopefuls, and a number of women in popular arenas, including sports, have done gravure photo shoots.

PAGE 63

Hayashi rice is the name of a dish consisting of rich beef stew served over rice. The names for both Hayashi rice and curry rice are said in English. *Gohan* is the Japanese word for rice.

PAGE 64

Hajimete no Otsukai ("My First Errand") is a television show in which small children are sent out on their first errand "alone" (to deliver something, buy something, etc.), while they're actually being filmed and looked after by the show's staff. A child's first time going out alone on an errand is considered a big milestone.

PAGE 65

Wakabamart means "four-leaf clover mart." Yui Hara has another manga called *Wakaba Girl*.

PAGE 67

In Japanese, the word for **stock** is *kabu*. Alice is holding a type of turnip called *kabu*.

PAGE 80

Rich family: Karen is described as an *ojou-sama* in Japanese, which is a rich girl archetype in manga, anime, and other forms of Japanese media. Typically, *ojou-sama* lack common knowledge, such as prices being a serious concern for those less wealthy.

PAGE 83

Shinobi is another word for a ninja. Shinobu's name is written with the same character as *shinobi* is.

PAGE 85

Four character idioms are sayings and proverbs that are always presented as four characters, famous in Japanese and Chinese cultures. Generally, the meaning is more elaborate than what the four characters are literally saying. In Japanese, Alice's idiom is *hou/on/sha/toku*, while Karen's is *yu/kai/tei/ketsu*. Though Youko and Shino's attempts are four characters long (*yaki/niku/tei/shoku* and *Hei/an/ji/dai*), they do not qualify as idioms.

PAGE 90

Takoyaki are fried octopus balls.

Taiyaki are fish-shaped cakes typically filled with red-bean paste (but they come in other flavors too).

PAGE 91

Gakuran is one of the traditional styles of school uniforms for boys. The uniform is usually all black, with the top having a high collar and buttons running all the way down the front.

PAGE 113
Though a cold version of ramen (called *hiyashi chuuka*) exists, ramen is typically served hot, which makes Karen's request to **"make it hot"** redundant. Not only that, but Karen says the word "hot" in English.

PAGE 116
Shi happens to be the pronunciation for the character meaning "death," adding to Shinobu's fear.

PAGE 118
Topknots, or *chonmage*, are a traditional Japanese hairstyle for men. Though they are typically associated with samurai, in modern times they're mostly seen on sumo wrestlers.

PAGE 120
Aya's wordplay in Japanese is *Karen ga karen na hana wo mitsuketa. Kono hana wa karen!* ("Karen found a lovely flower. This flower will never wither!")

kiniro 1 mosaic

Yui Hara

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This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

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